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REVIEW

OF THE

UNITARIAN CONTROVERSY.

[*Extracted from the Panoplist.*]

- A Letter to the Rev. Samuel C. Thacher, on the aspersions, contained in a late number of the Panoplist, on the Ministers of Boston and the vicinity. By WILLIAM E. CHANNING, minister of the church of Christ in Federal Street, Boston. Third edition, with additional remarks. Boston: Wells & Lilly. 1815. [July.] pp. 36.*
- A Letter to the Rev. William E. Channing, on the subject of his letter to the Rev. Samuel C. Thacher, relating to the review in the Panoplist on American Unitarianism. By SAMUEL WORCESTER, D. D. pastor of the Tabernacle Church, Salem. Third edition. Boston: S. T. Armstrong. 1815. [July.] pp. 36.*
- Remarks on the Rev. Dr. Worcester's letter to Mr. Channing, on the "Review of American Unitarianism," in a late Panoplist. By WILLIAM E. CHANNING, minister, &c. Second edition. Boston: Wells & Lilly. 1815. [August.] pp. 39.*
- Are you a Christian or a Calvinist? or do you prefer the authority of Christ to that of the Genevan Reformer? Both the form and the spirit of these questions being suggested by the late review of American Unitarianism in the Panoplist, and by the Rev. Dr. Worcester's letter to Mr. Channing. To which are added some strictures on both those works. By a LARMAN. Boston: Wells & Lilly. 1815. [August.] pp. 72.*
- A Second Letter to the Rev. William E. Channing, on the subject of Unitarianism. By SAMUEL WORCESTER, D. D. pastor, &c. Second edition. Boston: S. T. Armstrong. 1815. [August.] pp. 44.*
- Remarks on the Rev. Dr. Worcester's second letter to Mr. Channing, on American Unitarianism. By WILLIAM E. CHANNING, minister, &c. Boston: Wells & Lilly. 1815. [October.] pp. 48.*
- A Third Letter to the Rev. William E. Channing, on the subject of American Unitarianism. By SAMUEL WORCESTER, D. D. pastor, &c. Boston: S. T. Armstrong. 1815. [December.] pp. 80.*

THE controversy, which has been carried on at Boston in the course of the last year, respecting modern Unitarianism, is certainly one of the most important theological discussions, in which our readers can ever be called to take an interest. It relates to all the essential articles of the Christian faith; to the object of religious worship, the moral condition of man, the penalty of the divine law, the way in which sinners are reconciled to God, the nature, character and offices of the Savior, the regard which is due to him, the evidences of piety, the authority of the Scriptures, and the state of mankind in the world to come. All these topics, with an immense variety of others, are involved in the controversy now before the

public. With the best reason, therefore, may we solicit the attention of all, who have at heart the prosperity of the church and the spiritual welfare of themselves and their fellow men, to whatever may be laid before them on these subjects in our pages, if written with the spirit of the Gospel, and with that care and solemnity which the momentous questions at issue require.

About a year since, a pamphlet was published at Boston, which professed to give an authentic history of Unitarianism in America. This pamphlet, as most of our readers know, was reviewed at some length in the *Panoplist* for June last. The review induced Mr. Channing to write his Letter to Mr. Thacher, and occasioned, more or less directly, the publication of all the pamphlets, whose title-pages are copied, at the head of this article. Several other pamphlets owed their existence to the same cause; but we do not learn, that any importance has been attached to them.

As many of our present subscribers were not subscribers to the last volume, we propose to give a brief recapitulation of the review here referred to, and then to enter upon the consideration of the publications before us. We are persuaded, indeed, that such a recapitulation will be useful to all, who wish to retain the prominent points of the controversy distinctly in their minds. Let us turn, then, to the review.

We began by mentioning the silent, secret progress of a defection from orthodoxy in Boston and the vicinity, in its downward course to the lowest Socinianism, and to the borders of infidelity. We took notice of the artifice, which has been practised by latitudinarians, in concealing their real opinions, and giving the public to understand, that they do not differ materially from their orthodox brethren. Of this artifice we gave an instance, which had recently occurred. That our readers might be aware of the meaning, affixed to the word Unitarianism by Mr. Belsham, the author of the history which we were reviewing, we gave ample extracts from his writings, and expressed the substance of those extracts, in our own language, by way of summary. We examined the opposition, which some persons feel, to all religious controversy; and endeavored to show, that it is often absolutely necessary. Conceiving that the essential doctrines of the Scriptures were covertly attacked, and that attempts were constantly made to undermine the foundations of the Christian's hope, we declared ourselves conscientiously bound to expose the evil, and to resist it, to the utmost of our ability. We then gave an abridged account of the rise and progress of Unitarianism in this country, and of its propagation in Harvard College, for the materials of which we relied principally on Mr. Belsham's authorities. A long letter, written by William Wells, jun. Esq. we quoted verbatim from the pamphlet. We took notice of the chastisement, which Mr. Belsham inflicted upon the Boston clergy, for their cowardice, as he evidently considered it, in not avowing their religious opinions. We described several characteristics of Unitarianism, such as the following: Its disciples propagate their creed by negatives; they ascribe their conversion

not to the Bible, but to the works of Priestley, &c.; they systematically praise each other, and detract from their opponents. We commended Mr. Belsham's frankness in declaring, that Trinitarians and Unitarians could not be fellow-worshippers in the same temple, and in urging a separation. We urged the same thing; and pointed out the temper and spirit, with which such a separation ought to be effected. We guarded against the charge of having given an unfair representation of the Unitarians in this country, and referred the reader to most evident and incontrovertible proofs. The review was closed by some strictures on Mr. Wells's letter, which was taken as a specimen of the manner, in which the liberal party treat the opinions and characters of their antagonists.

Such is the substance of our review. We did not suppose it would be palatable to Unitarians; but we did most seriously intend, that it should afford them no just cause of complaint. That system of concealment, which has beyond all question been generally practised by them, demanded, as we thought, to be exposed with considerable severity. Whenever we stated facts, on any other authority than that of Unitarians themselves, we paid particular attention to the evidence by which the facts could be supported. We said nothing without deliberation; and we labored to express ourselves in such a manner, as to make no impression which was not strictly and literally correct, according to the most natural and obvious meaning of our words. It was with some surprise, therefore, though without the slightest apprehension or alarm, that we saw a number of most serious charges brought against us by Mr. Channing; charges not only serious in their import, but couched in the most unmeasured and violent language. To the examination of these charges we shall soon invite the attention of our readers.

Before we proceed to this examination, we must be indulged in saying, that controversial writings are often objected to, as descending to personalities, when there is no foundation in fact for the objection. If a writer falls at once into a violent passion, commits palpable blunders where it is easy to be correct, adopts the grossest sophistries, repeats misrepresentations which have been a thousand times detected, and appeals to violent prejudices in a strain of ranting declamation, it certainly may be very proper that these faults should be fairly exposed; and it is quite incorrect to stigmatize such exposure as containing mere personalities. To attempt victory in an argument by making an opponent personally odious, is altogether unjustifiable; but to exhibit the real delinquencies of the *writer*, is far from proving the existence of enmity or unkindness towards the *man*.

Shall we be pardoned in saying a word, as to the temper with which, unless we deceive ourselves, we enter upon this discussion? When Mr. Channing's letter first appeared, it was perused by us without the slightest feeling of ill-will toward the writer. We knew that he had done great injustice to our language, our arguments, and our intentions; and that his charges were in fact, and could easily be proved to be, perfectly groundless. Should full

credit be given to his representations, we knew that we must suffer extensively and severely; yet we had no anxiety for the issue. Time has shown, so far as we are capable of judging at present, that we had no cause for anxiety. Our actual sufferings, in consequence of Mr. Channing's attack, have as yet been so trifling as to defy computation; while the advantages, which we have derived from it, are important, and promise to be durable. Our readers will give us credit for coolness, when they consider that we have remained silent for nine months under charges of the most serious nature, preferred by a man of some influence and consideration, and tending to excite against us no small degree of popular animosity; charges, too, which we designed to refute, when the proper time should arrive. That time has arrived.

It may be asked, why we think it necessary, after so long a silence, to say any thing by way of reply to Mr. Channing? To this question we offer several answers. Some persons, (we hope their number is small,) are disposed to take silence for a confession of guilt. Others are unable to believe, till the fact is clearly proved, that high charges should be brought forward in a solemn and vehement manner, unless there is some foundation for them. But our principal answer is, that we think a just exhibition of the manner, in which this controversy has been conducted, will serve to illustrate the nature of the controversy itself. If it shall clearly appear, that Mr. Channing, with all his reputation at stake, has fallen into the grossest misrepresentations, made the most unwarranted statements, distorted the most innocent actions so as to give them an odious appearance, and written under the influence of a bitter temper; these things will afford some presumption, that the cause in which he is engaged is not a good one. In this point of view, the manner, the style, and the temper, of theological disputants are more important, than they are apt to imagine.

After making these observations, and, as we trust, feeling their applicability to the case before us, we shall certainly be very much to blame, if we indulge in violent language, or make a single unfair representation. We request the attention of our readers to this subject, with a particular desire that they should examine, with the utmost scrutiny, what we have to say. We shall be inexcusable, if, after patiently remaining silent so long, and professing to be dispassionate, we should become justly chargeable with the same faults, which we reprehend in others.

We propose in the first place, to examine the principal accusations preferred against us by Mr. Channing; secondly, to give a brief analysis and review of the discussion between Mr. Channing and Dr. Worcester; and, thirdly, to close with such miscellaneous reflections, as the state of the controversy seems to require.

Mr. Channing's first charge against our Review is that of *falsehood*. "Our conversation," says Mr. C. at the commencement of his letter to Mr. Thacher,—"*Our conversation turned, as you recollect, on the falsehood of that Review; &c.*" p. 3. Mr. C. speaks again, on the same page, of "*noticing the false and injurious*

charges contained in this review." In several subsequent passages, the charge of falsehood is strongly implied. This charge is afterwards qualified as follows; p. 9. "That he [the Reviewer] intended to deceive, I am unwilling to assert; but the most charitable construction, which his conduct will admit, is, that his passions and party spirit have criminally blinded him, and hurried him into an act, which could have been authorized only by the strongest evidence, and the most impartial inquiry." This qualification is not inserted, however, in immediate connexion with the charges; but the mind of the reader is left, for some time, to be influenced by the direct unexplained charge of falsehood, brought forward with great assurance, and enforced by a most vehement style.

The manner in which Mr. C. supports his charge is now to be examined.

"The Panoplist Review," says Mr. Channing, "asserts, 1. That the ministers of this town and its vicinity, and the great body of liberal Christians, are Unitarians, in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word."

"2. The Review asserts, that these ministers and liberal Christians are guilty of hypocritical concealment of their sentiments, and behave in a base, cowardly and hypocritical manner." pp. 4, 5.

In stating these assertions, Mr. C. does not use marks of quotation, but gives, as we are under the necessity of presuming, what he wishes his readers to receive for a correct account of what we had said. The first assertion he repeats in the same words; and there can be little doubt, that, if he had left the matter here, every reader would suppose him to have copied our words, though the marks of quotation had been accidentally omitted. The reason is very obvious. When one man undertakes to repeat what another man asserts, especially if the assertion is represented as a heavy crime, most persons would hold the accuser bound to give the very words of the assertion, and not quite different words, which his angry and agitated feelings might lead him to consider as expressing the same thing. After Mr. C. had given his statement of our assertion, he attempts to fortify it by three quotations from the Panoplist, in the following order; viz.

"We feel entirely warranted to say, that the *predominant religion* of the liberal party is decidedly Unitarian, in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word." "Pan. p. 267.

"We shall feel ourselves warranted hereafter, to speak of the fact as certain, that Unitarianism," meaning Mr. Belsham's, "is the predominant religion among the ministers and churches of Boston." "p. 254.

"The liberal party mutilate the New Testament, reject nearly all the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, and degrade the Savior to the condition of a fallible, peccable, and ignorant man." "p. 271.

It will be observed, that in the second of these quotations, Mr. C. has inserted the words, "meaning Mr. Belsham's," as an innuendo. Against the correctness of this innuendo we utterly protest. It is absolutely unwarranted. The third quotation is not

given with verbal accuracy, as it stands in the Panoplist, where it is a series of connected members forming part of a long sentence; but we do not complain of this circumstantial variation as having imparted any new meaning. After protesting against the innuendo, we are prepared to defend as strictly true, all that is said in these quotations, if the passages are taken in their proper connexion, and understood according to the obvious import of the language, in which they are expressed. We have reason to complain, however, of the manner in which Mr. C. has brought forward these quotations.

In the first place, we regret that Mr. C. should have been willing to prepossess his readers against us, by stating in his own words, and in a most obnoxious form, the assertion which he attempted to fasten upon us. This statement he made with a tone of vast assurance, and in such a manner as to preclude all further thought or examination on the part of those, who reposed implicit confidence in his fairness and accuracy, or whose minds, already in a state of high exasperation, were prepared to be thrown into ungovernable rage by a small additional excitement. We need not say, that when a reader is in a violent paroxysm of anger, he is poorly qualified to detect any inaccuracy, either of fact, or argument. A candid man would indeed perceive, that Mr. C.'s extracts do not support his allegation; but even such a man might suppose, that Mr. C. had blundered upon the wrong passages; or that the passages quoted did in fact convey a meaning more favorable to his statement, if taken in their several connexions, than when considered in a detached form. Scarcely any man would easily be led to suppose, that Mr. C. had gravely and repeatedly charged us with making an assertion, which we never made. Yet this is the fact.

Secondly; we think Mr. Channing was quite unfair, in changing the natural order of the quotations. His first quotation stands in the Panoplist thirteen pages after the second. As the quotation, which he places first, contains the name of Mr. Belsham, to many readers it would appear to support the innuendo, which Mr. C. ventured to place in his second quotation. Let the reader decide for himself, whether this inversion of the natural order of the quotations could have been made for any other reason, than the one just stated. If he shall be of opinion that it could not, he will not hesitate long in deciding, whether such a course of proceeding is justifiable.

Thirdly; it was uncandid in Mr. C. to give the passages, which he quoted, as though they had been naked assertions; whereas they were given in the Panoplist expressly as *conclusions*, deduced from a great variety of facts, which had been distinctly stated. The proper way of answering the Review was, to take up its several parts in order, to re-examine the witnesses, and to form conclusions at the end of each head, rather than at the beginning. This would have been the course pursued by such men as the Edwardses and Witherspoon, in reference to any work which they might have

thought it their duty to answer. The last thing, which these illustrious men would have sanctioned by their example, is, to fly into a violent passion at the commencement of a discussion, and thus to disgust all readers, except those who can at once be roused into a similar passion. The profit, which this latter class of readers would derive from an angry dispute, can easily be estimated. We do not deny, that Mr. C. professes to examine some of the testimony, which we had brought forward; but this he does very cursorily, and evidently with less reliance on any such investigation, than on the vague and heated declamation with which his pamphlet begins and ends.

Fourthly; Mr. C. brings together from every part of our Review detached passages, for the purpose of proving, that we made a general and indiscriminate charge, not only against the liberal party, but against "the great body of liberal Christians." But he entirely omits to notice two passages, which we inserted with the express design of limiting and explaining what we had said concerning the liberal party. The passages are as follows:

"The great majority of those, whose influence goes to swell the importance of the liberal party, are not involved in most of the censures, which this Review implies, or expresses." p. 266.

"If individuals dislike Mr. Belsham as a leader; if they are not willing to be classed among his followers; let them declare their own opinions openly. But let them not yield all their countenance to Unitarians, and yet complain if ranked in the same class, by those who have no means of learning their opinions except by their conduct." p. 268.

Every person must see at once, that these passages are very important, in the inquiry concerning our assertions, as they were stated by Mr. Channing. Yet these passages are entirely overlooked: we will not say designedly; for it is a maxim of law and of common sense, that the suppression of truth, and the suggestion of falsehood, are equally criminal: but we think ourselves fully justified in saying, that if Mr. C. had been as much engaged in making a fair statement of what we *did* say, as in exciting the passions of his readers by laying to our charge things which we did *not* say, the sentences which we have just quoted would have been candidly cited and considered by him.

We have just intimated, that Mr. C. laid to our charge things which we did not say. This is easily shown. "The Panoplist Review asserts," says Mr. C. "that the ministers of this town and its vicinity, and the great body of liberal Christians, are Unitarians in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word." This assertion, which we are accused of having made, consists of two parts. We will consider them in their order.

First, we are charged with having asserted, 'that the ministers of Boston and its vicinity are Unitarians in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word.' The only passages which Mr. C. quotes, as proving that we made this assertion, are those to which we have already called the attention of our readers. Nothing is said, in either of these passages, of the ministers in the vicinity of Boston; nor is

any thing said concerning these ministers generally, in any part of the Review. Now, as the ministers in the vicinity of Boston are much more numerous, than the ministers in Boston itself, the greater part of Mr. Channing's allegation falls at once to the ground. Among the ministers in the vicinity of Boston, a large proportion are decidedly orthodox. We certainly never thought of classing these men with any of the sorts of Unitarians, whom Mr. Channing describes; nor did we ever thus class them. Nor did we say, in either of the passages quoted by Mr. Channing, or in any other passage, that the ministers of Boston were Unitarians, in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word: nor did we say that the ministers of Boston generally were Unitarians in any sense of the word. Thus it appears, that not a single clause of this part of Mr. Channing's allegation can be supported by him. Let us now turn to the other part.

Secondly, we are charged by Mr. Channing with having asserted, "that the great body of liberal Christians are Unitarians, in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word." It might be sufficient to say, at once, that this charge is totally unfounded. We never mentioned "the great body of liberal Christians," in the whole course of the Review. We very much question whether we ever used the phrase "liberal Christians," in any place, or on any occasion whatever. It is a phrase, which we can by no means consent to apply to such men as Mr. Belsham and his friends in Great Britain, or to the persons who constitute the liberal party in this country. The phrase is very well in itself; but they, who should be forward to claim it, as descriptive of their own character, might very probably be least deserving of such a distinction. By the words used by Mr. Channing, viz. "the great body of liberal Christians," we should suppose all those persons to be meant, in every part of the world, who profess to be Christians, and claim the epithet liberal. Concerning such a general, undefined, and various class of professed Christians, scattered throughout the world, we never thought of making any assertion. We spoke indeed of the *liberal party*; but this is quite a different thing. The phrase, *liberal party*, we have used, occasionally, for the want of a better. We have thought it as little offensive, as any other phrase, which could be invented to designate the latitudinarians in our country, who deny and oppose those doctrines of the Bible, which have been usually called the doctrines of the Reformation; and who, by cooperating to decry these doctrines, and the doctrines of the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ, have formed themselves into a *religious party*. Though we repeatedly spoke of the liberal party, we said nothing of the "great body" of that party; much less did we say, that the great body of that party were Unitarians, in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word. Should we permit Mr. Channing to amend his charge, by inserting *liberal party* instead of *liberal Christians*, a favor which we are not under the smallest obligation to grant, still he could not substantiate what he has said. It is remarkable, that the only passage of the Review, which contains a description in any degree re-

sembling the phrase in question, viz. "the great body of the liberal party," implicitly disclaims the general, sweeping assertion, which Mr. C. charges us with having made. "The *great majority of those*," we say, "whose influence goes to swell the importance of the *liberal party*, are NOT involved in most of the censures, which this review implies, or expresses."

We have thus shewn, that we never made the assertions, which Mr. C. has laid to our charge. Let the reader here inquire, what sort of a controversial writer he must be, who brings forward his principal allegation in such a manner, as that not a single clause of it can be supported; and this, too, in a case where it was so perfectly easy to be accurate, and where all the errors, into which he has fallen, are the result of exaggeration.

We now proceed to state what we *did* assert, and to justify our assertions. It is necessary, in the first place, to ascertain in what sense we used the word Unitarianism, generally, throughout the Review. Our readers are doubtless aware, that the word Unitarian is claimed by all who refuse to believe in the doctrine of the Trinity. As there have been a great variety of sects, uniting in the rejection of the Trinity, though disagreeing on many other points, it seems desirable to know, at the commencement of any inquiry concerning Unitarianism, in what sense that word is used by the writers or parties in question. We were about reviewing a history of American Unitarianism. The reader would naturally wish to know what *sort of Unitarianism* the historian professed to be writing about. We endeavored to satisfy this natural curiosity, by stating what Mr. Belsham wished his readers to understand, when *he* used the word Unitarianism. In doing this, we conducted the matter with the most perfect uprightness, not even suspecting it to be possible, that our representations could be either blamed or contradicted. We made large extracts from Mr. Belsham's writings, not for the purpose of insinuating that the liberal party in this country were responsible for these writings, but that our readers might have some just view of the opinions held by the historian of Unitarianism in America. This we expressed to be our design in making the extracts; and that this was a proper, fair, and laudable design we have no hesitation in affirming. After closing the extracts we say, "Such is the Unitarianism which Mr. Belsham wishes to propagate, and of which he professes to write the history; so far, at least, as relates to its progress in this country. Of the existence of such Unitarianism, in the metropolis of New-England, our readers have generally been well persuaded; &c." p. 247. The representation here made is strictly accurate. Mr. Belsham was writing the history of the lowest Socinianism, and not of any higher sort of Unitarianism; and that the lowest kind of Socinianism has existed in Boston, for some time past, is undeniable.

Whenever we used the word Unitarianism without restriction, we left it to be understood in its large and indefinite sense. This is very manifest from the fact, that in the sentence just quoted, and in another to be considered hereafter, we expressly restricted the

term to the religious system of Mr. Belsham; whereas, in the great majority of instances, we left it entirely unrestricted. Thus, when we enumerate several important doctrines of the Scriptures, p. 249, we say, they "they are points, in which we differ essentially from Unitarians." Now it is beyond all question the fact, that when the points there enumerated come to be explained, Trinitarians differ, in respect to them, from *Unitarians of every class*. When we said, that 'we should feel ourselves warranted thereafter to speak of the fact as certain, that Unitarianism is the predominant religion among the ministers and churches of Boston,' we left the reader to understand the word Unitarianism, precisely as he should find the evidence before him would authorize him to understand it. We certainly did not restrict the word to the system of Mr. Belsham, unless Mr. Wells had thus restricted it. Whether he had thus restricted it, or not, the reader could judge. Mr. Channing is very willing to admit, that Mr. Wells used the word Unitarianism in its large and indefinite sense; and yet when we use the same word, without restriction or explanation, immediately after quoting Mr. Wells's letter; and declare ourselves warranted to use it, in consequence of the testimony contained in that letter; Mr. C. will have it, that we meant something essentially different from any thing which was intended by Mr. Wells. We doubt whether an entire want of candor was ever more strikingly evident. Will it be said, that Mr. Belsham uses the word Unitarianism in a restricted sense, as descriptive of the lowest Socinianism; that Mr. Wells, being a disciple of Dr. Priestley, agrees substantially with Mr. Belsham in religious doctrine; that in writing a private confidential letter to Mr. Belsham, it might naturally be supposed that Mr. Wells would use language which his correspondent would be able to understand; and that the inference would naturally be, that Mr. Wells used the word in a restricted sense? If such should be the inference, we, surely, are not to blame. Mr. Wells did write the letter which we quoted. He wrote it to Mr. Belsham: and he ought to have known in what manner Mr. B. would naturally understand him. In the letter of Mr. Wells to the Editor of the *Panoplist*, which was inserted in the number for July last, p. 310, he explains his meaning as follows:

"I might not find it easy, and I do not think it at all necessary, to define precisely the sense in which I use the very general terms *Unitarian* and *Unitarianism*, but it would be very absurd to understand me as affirming, that all the gentlemen, of whom I speak, are Unitarians in precisely the same sense with Mr. B. A Christian, not a believer in the Trinity, I have been in the habit of denominating an Unitarian. Mr. B. contends for a more limited sense. I did not advert to this, and at that time, I believe, did not know it. The sense in which I use the term may serve to explain what is said in my letter, of "Unitarianism consisting rather in *not* believing," upon which the reviewer lays such stress."

If, as Mr. Wells says, it would be 'very absurd to understand him as affirming, that all the gentlemen of whom he spoke are Unitarians in precisely the same sense with Mr. Belsham,' is it less

absurd to understand us as affirming all this, when we take our words from Mr. Wells, and use them expressly on his authority? We have not the slightest reluctance to admit Mr. Wells's explanation of his meaning, though we think his letter contains some things, which seem to militate against it. For example; "Unitarianism," says he, "consists rather in *not* believing." Now this is exactly descriptive of the Unitarianism of Dr. Priestley and Mr. Belsham, which is little short of downright infidelity; but it by no means answers to the system taught by the author of *Bible News*, which requires more faith, not to say credulity, and is more completely enveloped in mystery, than any other system which can be named. Mr. Wells says, that 'he did not advert to the fact, that Mr. B. contends for a more limited sense of the word Unitarian,' and 'he believes he did not then know it.' For a friend and correspondent of Mr. B. to confess himself ignorant, or unmindful, of the meaning which this heresiarch affixes to a word, which he assumes as the distinguishing badge of his sect, is rather singular, and could hardly be expected. Mr. Belsham will receive Mr. Wells's explanation as but a poor compliment. But whatever may have been Mr. W.'s knowledge on the subject, it is unquestionably true, that modern Socinians have claimed the word Unitarian as belonging exclusively to those, who believe in the simple humanity of Christ. In Evans's *Sketch of Religious Denominations*, which was republished in this country in 1807, we find the following passage. "But the Socinians have appropriated to themselves the appellation of *Unitarians*; and by this name they are *now more generally distinguished*. Though to this appellation they have no exclusive claim, yet it is somewhat more correctly descriptive of their religious tenets than that of Socinians, since they renounce many of the opinions of Socinus." p. 52. We never said, be it remembered, that Mr. Wells used the word Unitarian in the sense given to it by Mr. Belsham, his correspondent; i. e., in the sense given to it by the sect, to which Mr. Wells himself belongs. Whether we thought so, or not, is immaterial; but we submit it to our readers, whether a man *might not* have said and thought so, without any impeachment of his understanding or his honesty.

In short, Mr. Wells says, "Most of our Boston Clergy and respectable laymen (of whom we have many enlightened theologians) are Unitarian." Taking the words from his mouth, and relying expressly on his authority, we say, "Unitarianism is the predominant religion among the ministers and churches of Boston." If Mr. Wells spoke the truth, we merely repeated it. If it should hereafter be proved, that Mr. Wells was mistaken, (which will not be proved,) still we could never be condemned for relying on his testimony. If Mr. Wells is permitted to explain what he meant by the word Unitarianism, it evinces a pitiable want of fairness to refuse us the benefit of his explanation. If it is absurd to suppose, that he meant any thing other than Unitarianism in a large and indefinite sense, it is perfectly clear that we asserted nothing more, than that Unitarianism, in the same large and indefinite sense, is

the predominant religion among the ministers and churches of Boston. That we were warranted to make this assertion, neither Mr. Channing, nor any other member of the liberal party, will hesitate to acknowledge. Mr. C. has stated his own views on this subject, as follows:

"But I have always abstained most scrupulously from every expression, which could be construed into an acknowledgement of the Trinity. My worship, and sentiments have been Unitarian, in the proper sense of that word." *Letter*, p. 13.

"As to my brethren in general, never have I imagined for a moment, from their preaching or conversation, that they had the least desire to be considered as Trinitarians; nor have I ever heard from them any views of God, or of Jesus Christ, but Unitarian, in the proper meaning of that word." *ib.*

We hope Mr. C. will not charge us with *falsehood* for concluding, at the close of these extracts, as we concluded, at the close of Mr. Wells's testimony, that "Unitarianism is the predominant religion among the ministers and churches of Boston."

We now proceed to the consideration of the other principal passage, which is relied on to convict us of falsehood. It occurs thirteen pages after the one, which we have just disposed of, and is expressed as follows: "We feel entirely warranted to say, that the *predominant religion* of the liberal party is decidedly Unitarian, in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word." We made this declaration as a conclusion, deduced from a great variety of facts, which were particularly stated. Whether the conclusion was warranted by the facts, or not, is a question, which we are very willing our readers should settle for themselves. We designedly restricted the word Unitarian; a proof, as we have already intimated, that when we did not thus restrict it, we supposed it would be interpreted with more latitude. We selected the words *predominant religion* with great care, as expressing the precise meaning which we wanted to communicate, and as giving, by a single phrase, the exact truth without any mixture of error. The sentence was repeatedly read to a friend for consultation and advice; and the result was, that, in our opinion, the description was perfectly accurate.

Writers are apt to be fond of their own language. They sometimes see, in their own phrases, a propriety which their readers will not be able to descry. It is very possible that we were not fortunate, in the selection of the obnoxious phrase. Had we foreseen, that it would be made the ground of heavy accusations, we should have explained the sentence, in which it occurs, as follows. By saying, that the predominant religion of the liberal party is Unitarian, in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word, we intend, that those members of the liberal party, who believe in the simple humanity of Christ, and agree substantially with Dr. Priestley and Mr. Belsham in religious opinions, actually possess a *predominant influence* in the party to which they belong. We intend, that they possess a greater share of learning, of talent, of sectarian activity, and of influence in society, than all other classes of Unitarians put to-

gether. Possessing these qualities, their system of religion may, without impropriety, be called the predominant religion of the liberal party. Thus should we have explained, had we been aware that our language would need an explanation.

It will be observed, that we said nothing about *a majority of numbers*. This we could not do; for we had not the requisite information. The liberal party we knew to be divided into many classes. The number of persons belonging to each class it would be impossible for any man to state with accuracy. But the influence continually exerted was much less difficult to be estimated. On the question of numbers, Mr. C. represents himself and Mr. Thacher as agreeing, 'that a majority of their brethren believe, that Jesus Christ is more than man, &c.' This might be true consistently with our declaration. Whether it be so, or not, we have no adequate means of forming an opinion. Mr. C. afterwards gives it as his estimate, that those 'who believe the simple humanity of Jesus Christ, form a small proportion of the great body of Unitarians, in this part of the country.' We have no confidence at all in the accuracy of this estimate. We do not believe that Dr. Freeman, or the Layman, will admit it to be accurate. Though we do not profess ourselves able to form an estimate of the numbers, belonging to the different sub-divisions of the liberal party, yet we are much mistaken if the Socinians, added to those who have no fixed opinions concerning the character of our Savior, would not greatly outnumber all other classes of Unitarians in our country. But it is not probable that the question of numbers will ever be settled in this world; nor is it material that it should be.

We now turn, for a few moments, to the inquiry whether the Socinians had, or had not, a predominant influence in the liberal party, at the time the Review was written. We considered Harvard College as under the control of men, who published the General Repository, and praised the Improved Version. If so, it is unquestionably under the control of Socinians. The General Repository was published by gentlemen holding offices of instruction and government in the College. It is notorious that one of these gentlemen was the Editor, and that others were contributors. A printed circular letter was issued, stating the extraordinary qualifications of this Editor, and earnestly soliciting subscriptions to the work; and this circular was signed by a most active member of the corporation of the College, (the same who wrote a wonderfully temperate pamphlet, which we shall notice presently,) and by two persons of distinction in Boston. The President of the College will not deny, that he was friendly to the General Repository. That work was doubtless intended to be the great instrument of propagating Unitarianism in this country; and the Unitarianism, which it labored to propagate, was evidently Socinianism. Mr. Channing does not deny this; but simply declares, that 'he has heard some of its sentiments disapproved by the majority of those with whom he has conversed.' Be it so. This may only prove, that Mr. C. convers-

ed more, on the subject of the General Repository, with those Unitarians who agree with him in sentiment, than with others. All this is very natural. In regard to the Monthly Anthology, Mr. C. says 'he has read as little of that work as of most periodical publications;' but that Mr. Thacher has informed him, 'that the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ is not once asserted in it.' Very likely. It has not been the habit of Unitarians to avow all their opinions clearly, not even in their anonymous writings. But there are articles in the Anthology, which any person of judgment must pronounce to have been written by Socinians. The indecent levity with which the most sacred doctrines are ridiculed, and the contemptuous manner in which the orthodox are treated, declare plainly enough the school, in which the writers learned their logic and their manners.

It is worthy of remark, that Mr. Channing seems disposed to pay a very slight regard to the Anthology and the Repository; and to pass over them, as though they had been the productions of nobody, and nobody was responsible for them. We have observed the same disposition in other members of the liberal party. Is it then a fact, that either of these works had a dubious and obscure origin; and that they are to be considered as mere foundlings, disowned and deserted by all? Of the direction, under which the Repository was issued, we have already spoken. If ever a party was responsible for a publication issued under its auspices, continued by its patronage, conducted by its most distinguished members, and uniformly subservient to its cause, the liberal party in Boston and the vicinity are responsible for both the works in question. The Anthology was edited by those clergymen and laymen of the liberal party, who have been most praised by each other, and by the party generally, for their learning, their talents, their catholicism, and many other excellent qualities. Mr. Belsham, on the other side of the Atlantic, is loud in his praises of that work, and of the Repository. Yet Mr. C. intimates, that he has read little of the Anthology. This is but a sorry tale to tell his brethren, who doubtless supposed, that none but bigots could shut their eyes against the light, which shone from the pages of their favorite work. But whether Mr. C. read the Anthology little or much, his brethren were deeply engaged in providing materials for it. They met weekly to confer respecting it, and to conduct its affairs; and they wrote all the prominent articles which it contained. Their fostering care was continued, till, as Dr. Morse has well observed, "it sunk under the weight of its own sins;" and, after a moderate interval, the Repository arose as its successor, and was published by the same class of men. We must be permitted, therefore, to assign their proper importance to the articles which appeared in both these works.

To conclude what we have to say on this topic, there can be no doubt that the Repository was the favorite child of those, who had a predominant influence in giving theological instruction at Harvard College. The Repository was not only Socinian in its influence

generally, but seemed to take particular pleasure in bestowing emphatical praise upon the Improved Version of the New Testament; a sectarian work, which was published by Mr. Belsham and his friends. What stronger evidence can be required of us, that the College was under the influence of Unitarians, who harmonize with Mr. Belsham? It may be added, that the corporation of Harvard College consists of but six members beside the President; that two of these gentlemen belong to Dr. Freeman's society, and that one of the two is considered as decidedly the most active member of the corporation.

It is proper to observe, that in judging of the religious character of the College, we do not refer to those instructors, whose province has no particular connexion with theology. What the religious opinions of these gentlemen are, the public, we believe, have no means of determining.

If the College is Unitarian in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word, it follows almost of course, that the predominant religion of the liberal party is this kind of Unitarianism. The College is intended to exert, and does actually exert, a prodigious influence. The religion which is prevalent there will be the prevalent religion of the party.

Besides, it is to be remembered, that those gentlemen, who are known to be Socinians, and who possess great influence not only in reference to the College, but in reference to other important subjects, receive the unqualified support of the whole liberal party. This is a very material consideration. Mr. C. will not pretend, for a moment, that a gentleman's agreeing precisely with Mr. Belsham would form any objection to his being elected a member of the corporation, or established in a professorship.

We gave no opinion as to the kind of Unitarianism, which prevailed in Boston. But let us look at the religious state of this metropolis, when the Review was written. Over the Congregational, Episcopalian, and Baptist churches, there were sixteen pastors. Of these, seven were known to be decided Trinitarians. It is probable, that all the remaining nine are claimed by the liberal party. When our Review first appeared, and we were so loudly charged with falsehood, it was unhesitatingly admitted, that *three* clergymen in Boston were Unitarians of the Priestleian school. Now we humbly conceive, that three form no despicable proportion of nine. It might be true, without supposing any miracle, that three should have a predominant influence over six. Had we asserted, that Unitarianism of Mr. Belsham's sort was the predominant religion of the liberal party in Boston, a mere statement of numbers, such as we have given, would by no means prove us mistaken. About two months before our Review was written, one clergyman was settled in Boston and another was dismissed. The latter gentleman is, we believe, considered as a Socinian by the liberal party. He has probably been praised more by the party, within two years past, than any four of their most distinguished men; and this is saying a good deal. If not a Socinian of the lowest class, which we believe

to be the fact, he is totally opposed to the scheme taught in a book, which has the modest title of *Bible Notes*. It appears, then, that the clergymen in Boston, who were generally reputed Socinians, were *four* in number, but a short time before the Review was written; and that all the other clergymen of the liberal party, in that town, were but *five*. There have been many changes among the clergy of Boston within six years past, and it is not always easy to ascertain the relative influence of numerous individuals of the same party; but of this we are confident, that, during the whole course of the period mentioned, the Socinian part of the Boston clergy has received twice, if not five times, as much praise, as all the other Unitarian clergy of the town. Praise may not be a very exact measure of influence; but where an exuberance of praise is bestowed, it is natural to suppose that some influence is possessed. It is our deliberate opinion, that those clergymen in Boston, who, for several years past, have favored Socinianism rather than any higher kind of Unitarianism, have possessed more talents, more learning, more activity, and more influence, than the rest of the Unitarian clergy of Boston. In this opinion we may be mistaken; but it is by no means peculiar to ourselves.

If we look at the "respectable laymen," who are declared by Mr. Wells to be Unitarian, those of them, who are generally reputed Socinians, are by no means to be disregarded, in settling the question of influence. The congregation of Dr. Freeman contains many persons, who have no small share of weight in society. Of these we have mentioned two, as members of the corporation. Nor are the lay Socinians of Boston confined to the congregation of Dr. Freeman. We do not think that Mr. Wells should be entirely overlooked. He is a man of literature; and, in consequence of his connexion with the press, we doubt whether he has been second to any one, in the services which he has rendered to the Unitarian cause. Leaving the metropolis, nearly all the laymen of the liberal party, who have been extolled for their learning, and their biblical erudition, have been represented to us as Socinians.

On the whole, we solemnly declare to our readers, that we have taken into consideration the reputed learning, talents, and influence, of all the prominent individuals of the liberal party; we have looked at these gentlemen, one by one, and endeavored to make an impartial estimate of their relative and aggregate influence; we have done this repeatedly, both before and since our Review was published; and the result has uniformly been a conviction, that the predominant religion of the liberal party is Socinianism: i. e. Unitarianism in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word. By this we do not intend, that the open, fixed, avowed Socinians form a majority of the liberal party; but that these persons, and their adherents, exert a greater power in forming the religious character of this country, than is exerted by all other classes of Unitarians.

In forming this opinion, we have considered, that as Socinians are more fixed in their religious tenets, than their Unitarian brethren are, or ever have been, the influence of Socinians is directly

and constantly operative in the promulgation of their peculiar doctrines; while the influence of other Unitarians, so far as it relates to this subject, is principally exerted to produce a disbelief of the doctrines of the Trinity and the proper Divinity of Christ, leaving their converts in a state of endless vacillation and perplexity, in regard to the character of our Savior, till they gradually sink down into Socinianism. Dr. Freeman evidently considers the negative preaching, which he has so well described, as favoring his own religious system. It is to be observed, further, that the most popular Socinian writers do not hesitate to charge every species of Arianism with the grossest absurdity; and to stigmatize as idolatry that inferior kind of religious homage, which the higher classes of Unitarians render to Christ. Thus Socinians are able to direct against Arians many of the most plausible arguments, which the latter allege against the doctrine of the Trinity. This gives them no inconsiderable advantage. We do not believe, that Unitarianism, in any form, is about to prevail in this country; but, should it prevail, we have no doubt it will appear under the character of open, avowed, Socinianism, which, in the opinion of Mr. Belsham and his friends, is the only consistent Unitarianism.

The remaining passage, which Mr. Channing quotes from our Review, for the purpose of supporting his charge of falsehood, is the following: "The liberal party mutilate the New Testament, reject nearly all the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, and degrade the Savior to the condition of a fallible, peccable, and ignorant man." We cannot do better, in reference to this passage, than to quote the vindication of it, which is to be found in Dr. Worcester's First Letter. We are happy to give this long quotation, not only because it is a perfect vindication of ourselves, but because it is a fair specimen of the upright, honorable, and forcible manner, in which Dr. W. conducts his discussion. If our readers suppose us biassed in favor of a friend and advocate, all he have to say is, *let them judge for themselves.*

"This is the last of the three passages which you have cited to shew that the "Review asserts, that the ministers of Boston and the vicinity, and the great body of liberal Christians, are Unitarians, in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word," and upon which you ground your principal accusation of falsehood. But is it here asserted, that all the individuals of the liberal party actually do the things, and all of them, which the party is said to do? Is this a fair interpretation of the passage? Or if it admits of this, does it fairly admit of no other?

"The apostles, Sir, as you very well know, repeatedly charge the Jewish rulers and people, generally, even "the great body" of the nation, with having "crucified and slain the Lord of life and glory." Yet, as you also know, but a very small part of that great body actually imbrued their hands in his blood. But some of them did; and of the rest, some more, and others less directly, consented to the deed. Hence they were generally involved in the guilt, and brought under the charge; and upon the great body, eventually, "wrath came to the uttermost." Such was the judgment of the apostles; and such the judgment of Him, whose throne is established in righteousness.—And, Sir, if among the liberal party, the things charged by the Reviewer are done; if some of the party do actually, "mutilate the New Testament,

reject nearly all the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, and degrade the Savior to the condition of a fallible, peccable, and ignorant man,"—and of the rest, some more, and others less directly, consent to all this; if, as a party, or as individuals of the party, they bear no decided testimony against these deeds, and do nothing effectually to secure, or to purge themselves from the guilt of them; then, is it not true, and right, and proper to say of the party generally, that they do these things? and will they not generally, with all who adhere to them, be held to answer for them at the bar of the righteous Judge?

"But are not these things done:—I tremble, my dear Sir, while I put this question to your conscience:—tremble, not because I feel that I am doing wrong; but because I consider it a question of infinite solemnity.—It surely will not be denied, that "the New Testament is mutilated;"—it will not be denied, that "the Savior is degraded to the condition of a fallible, peccable, and ignorant man;"—nor should it any more be denied, that "nearly all the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel are rejected." I do believe you will yourself admit, that nearly all the doctrines are rejected, which by the venerable founders of the New England churches were held as fundamental;—which the great body of the Protestant churches, since the Reformation, have held as fundamental.

"How great a proportion of the liberal party actually do all this, and to how great an extent the rest of them consent to it, I would be devoutly thankful, that I am not particularly concerned to determine. But I must seriously ask, whether, from the representations made in your Letter, were there no other means of judging in the case, there would not be most fearful reason to apprehend, that you and your liberal brethren generally have done but very little to secure yourselves from the general charge; or, I must add, to purge yourselves from the general guilt?—It grieves me, dear Sir, to state, that in your Letter, you tell us, in so many words, that "to believe with Mr. Belsham is no crime;"—by which I understand, no sin,—no offence against God—against Christ—against the Gospel—against the cause and kingdom of truth and holiness.—No sin—no offence, to hold Christ to have been no more than "a fallible, peccable, and ignorant man;"—to discard those parts of the New Testament which assert his pre-existence, his miraculous conception, his divinity, and his atonement, as either spurious, erroneous, or extravagantly hyperbolic;—to deny that his death was an expiatory sacrifice for sin, that "we owe him any gratitude for the benefits which we are now receiving," that "we have any reason to hope for his future interposition;"—to deny the inspiration of the Scriptures generally, and reject all the fundamental, all the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel!—You are also most studiously careful, most exquisitely tender, lest any "statement you make should be considered, as casting the least reproach on those amongst us, who believe in the simple humanity of Jesus Christ;" and, of course, agree with Mr. Belsham, if not in all, yet certainly in the most material articles of his creed:—most studiously careful, most exquisitely tender, lest you should wound their feelings, abridge their influence, or hinder their success in propagating their sentiments! And from other parts of your Letter, it would seem that such has been the uniform feeling, and conformable to it the uniform practice, not only of yourself, but of your liberal brethren in general.

"Now, Sir, if such is the real fact, however small a proportion of the liberal party those may be, who actually do the things in question; yet is it not perfectly correct to say, generally, that the liberal party do them. And if so, where is the foundation for the serious charge of falsehood, so vehemently urged against the Reviewer?" pp. 10—12.

It is in the way, which Dr. W. describes, and in that way only, that a *party* can ever be made responsible for any thing. The leading, prominent, active members of a party are always comparatively few. Those, who do not act on a large scale, are responsible for

yielding their influence to others who do act thus. This matter is always perfectly understood in politics. Suppose the leader of a political party to be chargeable with certain alleged misconduct; is it impossible that the party should be made responsible for it? By no means. If the leader in question is notoriously a leader of the party, and if the party do not protest against his conduct, or disclaim it; especially if they give him new proofs of their confidence, and do all in their power to sustain and augment his influence, they are undoubtedly, in the eye of conscience, and of God, responsible for what he has done.

Whether the liberal party patronized the Improved Version of the New Testament, or not, we shall not now examine. On this topic, we refer the reader to what was said in our number for April, 1813. Whatever may be said by Mr. C. or any one else, we *positively know*, that the liberal party patronized that work. To explain ourselves, we *know* that leading members of the party greedily purchased it, gave it away in charity, urged others to do the same, applauded it, and publicly declared concerning it, in the General Repository, that it is "a version far more faithful, more correct, and more intelligible, than that in common use." We fully believe, that leading members of the party once intended to bestow it in charity, under the sanction of Bible Societies. Our belief is founded, in part, on the opposition expressed by some of these leading members to the formation of a certain Bible Society, which opposition was supported by the express declaration, that the persons who made it were unwilling to give away the Bible in our common version. And if the Improved Version is "far more faithful, more correct, and more intelligible, than that in common use," as it is declared to be, in a work published by gentlemen who hold offices of instruction and government in Harvard College, why should it not be given away by Bible Societies? Though Mr. C. would seem to disapprove of this version, it is remarkable that his disapprobation, (if disapprobation it can be called,) is couched in the mildest terms. "I can scarcely remember an individual," says he, "who, in speaking of this version, has not expressed an unfavorable opinion at least of some of its notes." Is this all? If so, it goes but a little way towards proving, that the liberal party did not patronize the work. Many an individual might be very much engaged in circulating a book, and yet express an unfavorable opinion of some of its notes. The Editors of the Improved Version have most audaciously rejected whole chapters of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke; and this, by their own confession, against the authority of all the manuscripts and versions extant; they have explained away nearly all the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, and wrested the whole New Testament, so that it may speak the language of their sect; and yet, all that Mr. C. can find in his heart to say against this version, is expressed in the cautious and guarded sentence just quoted. It is of very little consequence, whether Mr. C. pronounces a faint or a full condemnation of the Improved Version. The weakness and absurdities of

that work have been set in so clear a light by Magee, Nares, Laurence, and others, that it can never sustain any character, but a bad one; and must gradually sink into oblivion, the efforts of the General Repository to uphold it notwithstanding.

We must bestow a word or two upon the following passage in Mr. Channing's Letter.

"The conduct of the Reviewer, in collecting all the opinions of that gentleman, [Mr. Belsham,] not only on the Trinity, but on every other theological subject, in giving the *whole* collection the name of *Unitarianism*, and in exhibiting this to the world as the creed of liberal Christians in this region, is perhaps as criminal an instance of unfairness, as is to be found in the records of theological controversy." p. 7.

After the preceding discussions, it cannot be necessary that we should go into a particular examination of this charge.

We did not collect all the theological opinions of Mr. Belsham; but those opinions only, which relate to the most important subjects of Divine Revelation. It was obviously proper to give his views on these subjects, as our readers could in no other way be made acquainted with the prominent features of his theological system; and Mr. C. knows very well, that the tendency of a *system* is not apparent to all readers, from the mere statement of a particular doctrine. The various parts of Mr. Belsham's scheme are dependent upon each other. The history of modern Unitarianism clearly proves, that when the doctrine of the Trinity is rejected, the descent is rapid, and almost uniform, to the lowest kind of Socinianism. This is the last stage, in the course toward downright, avowed, infidelity. It is impossible to go further, and claim the appellation of Christians. But other classes of Unitarians are in a state of perpetual fluctuation, doubt, and uncertainty. They cannot describe their own creed, so that the description shall answer for any length of time.

We did not give to this collection the name of *Unitarianism*. Mr. Belsham, indeed, claimed that word, as the property of himself and his friends; and we have seen from Evans, that the claim has been extensively admitted. Mr. B. did not speak in his own name only, but in the name of his party; and the same party, on both sides of the Atlantic, now use the name as strictly, and often as exclusively, appropriate to themselves.

We did not exhibit this collection as the creed of liberal Christians in this region. There is nothing to warrant such an assertion, unless it be the passages, which have been already considered. How far they warrant it, we leave others to decide.

We remark here, that if our Review did not properly describe the liberal party, as to its sub-divisions, and their relative influence, our deficiency must be ascribed to the facts, that Mr. Belsham was the historian of the party, and that we placed much reliance on him and his Boston correspondents; and to another notorious fact, that many of the clergy of the liberal party have, till lately, studiously concealed their religious opinions. We say *till lately*,

because a considerable change has taken place, in this particular, since our Review was published. From Mr. Channing's account of his own preaching, we think it would be impossible for his hearers to tell what sort of Unitarianism he held. With what propriety, then, could he demand of us, that we should know in exactly what class he, and his particular friends, ought to be reckoned? Mr. Belsham wrote a professed history of Unitarianism in this country. He gave his authorities without hesitation or reluctance; and he was no stranger to the party of whom he wrote. He has been visited by clergymen of the liberal party, who have been in England; we are informed they preached in his pulpit; and he has corresponded with others. He supposed he knew the party in this country perfectly well, and was abundantly able to write their history. We believe he knew much more about their religious doctrines, than it was easy for an orthodox man to know. While we relied upon the testimony of Dr. Freeman and Mr. Wells, we felt ourselves on safe ground. But had we attempted to go beyond these authorities, and write a particular history of the various opinions held by all the clergy of the liberal party, we should have found ourselves deplorably destitute of materials.

From what has already been offered in this article, it must appear, we think, even to Mr. Channing himself, that the charge of *falsehood* is not the proper charge to be preferred against us, if we had made an erroneous estimate of the influence of Socinians. How often do men mistake, in weighing the influence of different political parties? or of different and jarring interests in the same party? And how indecorous is it, how ungentlemanly, to stigmatize every such error as a falsehood? Look, for example, at the present state of France. Men of intelligence, who have resided long at Paris, are now divided in opinion, as to what were the real wishes of a majority of the French people, in reference to Napoleon and the Bourbons, in the spring of 1814, and the fall of that year, in the spring of 1815, and subsequently to the battle of Waterloo. Some of these men are doubtless mistaken in their estimate of parties. Shall they of course be charged with falsehood? We mean not to admit, that there is any good reason to suppose the statement, which we made, to be erroneous. But if it had been *proved* to be erroneous, which is far enough from the fact, a vehement charge of falsehood would never have been resorted to, unless the mind of Mr. C. had been in a state very different from that, which is favorable to a dispassionate inquiry after truth.

There is one more passage in Mr. Channing's Letter, which a proper regard to our own character induces us to examine. It is that, in which we are accused of having "distorted" a part of Mr. Wells's letter to Mr. Belsham. In an early part of the Review, we had quoted the whole of this letter; and towards the close of our discussion we offered some remarks upon it, quoting phrases and parts of sentences, as is universally customary, when writers are commenting on passages, which have been previously quoted, or which are already sufficiently known to their readers. Among

these parts of sentences, thus quoted from Mr. Wells's letter, a passage occurs, which evidently gave Mr. C. no common degree of pain. After mentioning it, and laying it before his readers, he gives vent to his feelings in the following words.

"This passage, as it stands in the Review, has the marks of quotation, as if taken from Mr. Wells's letter. Let me ask you to look back, and compare it carefully with the second sentence, which I have extracted from that letter. You perceive, that by mutilating that sentence, and by printing the last words in Italics, the reviewer has entirely done away the meaning of Mr. Wells, and contrived to give to the common reader a directly opposite impression to what that gentleman intended to convey. An unperverted mind turns with sorrow and disgust from such uncharitable and disingenuous dealing; and why all this labor to distort what is so plain? The object is, to fix the character of knaves and hypocrites on a large class of Christians and Christian ministers. I might here be permitted to dip my pen in gall; but I do not write for those, whose moral feeling is so dull, as to need indignant comment on practices like these." p. 12.

In this paragraph we are plainly charged with having mutilated a passage in Mr. Wells's letter, for the purpose of giving a false impression, and of fixing the character of knaves and hypocrites on men, who do not deserve such a character. The language of Mr. C. evidently assumes it as an undoubted fact, that we had incurred the guilt of wilful and malicious falsehood, perpetrated in a very base manner, and for a most detestable purpose. If this representation of our conduct is a just one, we freely confess that it admits of no excuse nor apology; and that nothing but the sincerest penitence, and the amplest reparation, could be urged as a reason why a sentence of severe reprobation should not be pronounced against us. We have always considered, and wished our readers to consider, a designed misquotation, made for the purpose of injuring a writer, or any other person, as one of the foulest crimes. It is a crime not unfrequently committed, in this fallen world; but, like many other crimes, it is not unfrequently charged upon the innocent. Of this every person must be convinced, who has read much controversy, either literary, political, or religious. When a writer feels himself in difficulty, it is an easy matter to raise a clamor about misrepresentation, or misquotation. It would be a wonder if he could not say some things, on these topics, which would appear plausible to superficial readers, or to those who are willing to take his word without examination. It is impossible to quote whole chapters, whole paragraphs, or even whole sentences, every time an author is alluded to, unless the reviewer is disposed to incumber his discourse, so as to make it intolerably tedious to every reader.

We have always been religiously scrupulous on this subject. We have been uniformly careful not only to give the meaning, but the words, of the writer; and when we have found it necessary to quote phrases and parts of sentences, we have been particularly cautious that no injustice should be done through haste or inattention. A careless misquotation we think should be severely blamed;

a wilful one, utterly abhorred. Whether we have erred through carelessness, let the readers of our past volumes examine and decide. That we have never been guilty of a wilful misquotation, we certainly know. We should as soon think of robbing on the highway.

Let us now look at the passage, which Mr. C. accuses us of having misquoted for so base a purpose. This passage, as it was published in the *Panoplist*, p. 253, where it forms a part of Mr. Wells's letter to Mr. Belsham, and is accurately printed from the London copy of Mr. Belsham's book, reads as follows: "Most of our Boston Clergy and respectable laymen (of whom we have many enlightened theologians) are Unitarian. Nor do they think it at all necessary to conceal their sentiments upon these subjects, but express them without the least hesitation when they judge it proper." In examining Mr. Wells's letter, we thought our readers would be gratified by seeing, in a connected view, a long string of laudatory epithets, which Mr. W. had bestowed upon the liberal party and their cause. After quoting a high-sounding catalogue of honorable qualities, which he had attributed to his own party, we selected the *persons*, whom he had distinguished by his praises. The list may be found at page 269, and runs thus: "When we come to persons, we find 'Mr. Norton, an excellent young man,' 'the very worthy and learned Dr. Ware,' 'Dr. Kirkland the president,' 'most of the Boston clergy and respectable laymen, (many of whom are enlightened theologians.) who do not conceal their sentiments, but express them, *when they judge it proper*,' and 'Judge Thatcher, an excellent man and most zealous Unitarian:' these are drawn up in battle-array, in the liberal ranks." Now the reader will easily see, that if we had quoted all the sentences, from which the foregoing phrases are taken, we should have merely re-quoted a great part of Mr. W.'s letter; a mode of proceeding, which would have been altogether futile, as we had previously given the whole letter. We do not suppose, that Mr. C. is to be understood as blaming the mere quotation of phrases and parts of sentences; for *he* quotes in scarcely any other way. But it is the alleged alteration of Mr. Wells's meaning, which he so strongly condemns. On this point we are at issue with him. We deny that the meaning of Mr. W. was altered, in any other manner than is implied in making a fair abridgement; and, as to the correctness of this denial, we confidently appeal to our readers. When we wrote the abridged sentence, we were particularly careful that Mr. W. should not suffer from it. We considered, indeed, that the passage was weakened by any abridgment; but the alteration, inconsiderable as it was, appeared to us favorable to the party which Mr. W. was describing. We should have much preferred giving the whole of Mr. W.'s two sentences, even for the purpose which we then had in view, could we have done it, and yet form the whole string of encomiums, so that they could be read in continuity. This we endeavored to do, but were not able. Mr. C. says, that the passage "has the marks of quotation, as if taken from Mr. Wells's letter."

We reply, that it is taken from Mr. W.'s letter, though in an abridged form. He adds, that "the reviewer has entirely done away the meaning of Mr. Wells." This we totally deny; and we regret much that Mr. C. did not state *what that meaning is*, which we had done away. He proceeds to allege, that we "contrived to give to the common reader a directly opposite impression to what that gentleman intended to convey." We are here again obliged to content ourselves with a positive denial; for Mr. C. does not vouchsafe us any explanation of what he means by that "*directly opposite impression*," which we had "contrived to give to the common reader." We can see but one meaning, which any reader, common or uncommon, can gather from the passage in question, either in its original or its abridged form. Does not Mr. Wells say, that "most of the Boston clergy and respectable laymen do not conceal their sentiments?" He says, at least, that "they do *not think it necessary* to conceal their sentiments on these subjects;" by which we supposed him to mean, that they do not, *in fact*, conceal their sentiments. Does he not say, that these clergymen and laymen "express their sentiments, *when they judge it proper*?" He says, that they "express them," [their sentiments,] "without the least hesitation, when they judge it proper." Where is the mighty difference between these statements? Where is the occasion for the vehement wrath, which Mr. C. poured forth on this subject? We shall be told, perhaps, that the difference is too clear to require to be specified; and that our crime is too flagrant to need a particular exposure. Such language is very cheap; and it may answer in the circle in which Mr. Channing moves; but, he may rest assured, it will answer no where else.

It appears, however, from Mr. Channing's Remarks on Dr. Worcester's first letter, that our principal criminality lies in printing the last five words of the quotation in Italics. The phrase, "*when they judge it proper*," seems to have wonderfully discomposed the minds of Unitarians. We supposed it would; not because it is printed in Italics; but because it is one of those important circumstances, which add greatly to the value of Mr. W.'s testimony, and which prove, more conclusively than direct assertions, the concealment which has been practised by the liberal party. Mr. C. alleges, in the pamphlet last referred to, p. 34, that the printing of this clause in Italics "entirely changes the meaning of the sentence." How it does this, and what the meaning is before the change, and what afterwards, Mr. C. does not inform us; nor can we even conjecture what the complaint of Mr. C. amounts to, unless it be, that we did very wrong to call the attention of our readers to the clause in question. We presume the legitimate use of Italics to be comprehended in this simple rule; viz. that a reviewer, or any other writer, may print in Italics any quoted phrase or sentence, to which he wishes to direct the mind of the reader. All that we understand by the use of Italics, in quoted passages, is, that the person who quotes, and not the original writer, is desirous of calling attention to such passages. The practice of the Christian Observer, and of

every respectable modern work, is conformed to this rule. Nay, the practice of Mr. C. himself is conformed to the same rule; for he often prints in Italics quoted passages, which are not thus marked by the original writers. It by no means follows, that every clause, which is, or may be, of great importance, is considered to be important by the writer. Far from it. On the contrary, many of the most important circumstances seem to owe their appearance to mere accident, or inadvertence. In the production and examination of oral testimony, it often happens, that great stress is justly laid upon a word, or a phrase, which the witness himself did not think of any importance whatever; and which he is surprised to find taken up and dwelt upon with such interest. We feel, therefore, that we had a perfect right to print the words, "*when they judge it proper,*" in Italics; that we did no injustice to Mr. W. by thus printing them; and that, should we have occasion to repeat them, we shall still possess the right of using Italics, or capitals, just as we please.

It is not for the purpose of retorting, or retaliating, but to promote the sober ends of truth and justice, that we advise Mr. Channing to look at the manner in which his own quotations are made. In extracting from Mr. Wells's letter the very sentence, which furnished him with a pretext for the violent attack upon us, he is chargeable with a gross blunder. Referring to this sentence, as we had abridged it, he says to Mr. Thacher; "Let me ask you to look back and compare it carefully with the second sentence, which I have extracted from that letter." Now one would think, that if he wished Mr. T. to "compare it *carefully*," he would have felt the necessity of quoting it carefully. Far otherwise. The sentence, as he quotes it, reads thus: "Nor do they think it at all necessary to conceal their sentiments, but express them *without reserve* when they judge it proper." The real sentence, as we accurately quoted it at large in Mr. W.'s letter, has the latter clause thus: "but express them *without the least hesitation* when they judge it proper." This is a very material variation. It so far alters Mr. W.'s testimony, as to make him declare that which is certainly unfounded, where he had said nothing but the truth: for though the clergy of the liberal party may 'express their sentiments,' or at least some of them, "*without the least hesitation*," in conversation with their friends, and "WHEN THEY JUDGE IT PROPER;" yet they never do, and never can, on any occasion whatever, as Mr. Channing's writings sufficiently prove, 'express their sentiments generally *without reserve*.' It might have been well, if Mr. C. had thought more about making a fair and accurate quotation himself, and less about 'dipping his pen in gall' to transform a perfectly innocent transaction into a heinous crime.

But this is not the worst misquotation, which Mr. C. is bound to answer for. He professes to give, p. 10. what he calls "the second charge of the Review." In doing this, he prints a sentence of five lines with marks of quotation, so that every reader would suppose it to have been taken *verbatim*; and that it stood, in our Review,

as a continued sentence. The fact is, that all the words of the sentence are not to be found, even in separate clauses, any where in the review; but nearly all of them are to be found in the following manner. For the first line of the sentence you must search p. 250 of the Panoplist; for the second, p. 251, near the bottom; for the third, p. 260; and the two last may be discovered in p. 262. A fair and honorable way, indeed, of making quotations! This is not all. If our meaning had been correctly given, (supposing it possible that it could be correctly given, in a sentence thus patched up.) we should not complain. But Mr. C. represents us as directing this obnoxious sentence against "the ministers of Boston and the vicinity, and the most considerable members of the liberal party," whereas not a single clause of it is thus applied. One clause is applied to the leading Unitarians in this country; another to clergymen whom Mr. Belsham reprehended so severely for their cowardice; another to those, who were implicated in Mr. Wells's representation; and the remaining clause was not applied by us at all, but was left as a mere general observation, of which the truth was so evident that it could not be denied.

We shall leave this subject after noticing a circumstance, which Mr. Channing cannot pretend to justify. It is this. Though he brought against us a charge of having misquoted a sentence from Mr. Wells's letter, he entirely omitted to inform his readers, that we had published the *whole of that letter*, in a preceding part of our review, where the sentence in question was accurately given. This is a fact which his readers ought to have known; but which, as he must be aware, many of them never would know, unless he informed them of it. If we had erred, in the case alleged, our readers had ample means of detecting the error; indeed an attentive reader could not help detecting it; and this circumstance would afford a strong presumption, that we had not erred intentionally. But Mr. C. inflames the minds of his readers with the charge, that we had wilfully and maliciously misquoted a certain passage; while he forgets to tell them, that we had previously quoted the same passage accurately; (which is more than *he* was able to do;) and that we had quoted it not by itself merely,—but with its whole context. Thus prone is Mr. C. to bring forward inflammatory and exaggerated charges, without the slightest support for them; and thus forgetful of the plainest demands of justice.

The only remaining grand topic, on which Mr. Channing dwells, for the purpose of substantiating the charge of falsehood, is expressed by him as follows: "The Review asserts, that these ministers and liberal Christians [*i. e.* the ministers of Boston and its vicinity and the great body of liberal Christians] are guilty of hypocritical concealment of their sentiments, and behave in a base, cowardly and hypocritical manner." p. 5. Now we have shown at large, under a preceding head, that we made no assertion at all, concerning the ministers of Boston generally, nor concerning the ministers of the vicinity generally, nor concerning the great body of liberal Christians. It did not then occur to us, that Mr. Channing had explained himself, on that subject, in his Remarks on Dr. Worces-

ter's First Letter. His explanation is in these words: "It is true, that this passage may be understood as charging the Review with asserting, that *all the ministers of Boston of all denominations* are Unitarians of Mr. Belsham's school. I ought to have said, that the Review maintains—that the great body of liberal ministers in Boston and its vicinity, and of liberal Christians, are Unitarians, in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word." p. 5. And of course, Mr. Channing, after this explanation, is to be considered as having charged us with asserting, that "the great body of liberal ministers in Boston and its vicinity, and of liberal Christians, are guilty of hypocritical concealment of their sentiments, and behave in a base, cowardly and hypocritical manner." No such assertion was ever made by us. We made no sweeping declaration concerning 'the great body of liberal ministers in Boston and its vicinity.' We never mentioned the great body of liberal Christians. We animadverted, indeed, with some severity, on the concealment, which had been practised by the *leading Unitarians* in this country; that is, by a *majority* of these leading Unitarians; and from the representations of Mr. Belsham, Dr. Freeman, and Mr. Wells, we censured what these three gentlemen evidently considered as a temporizing policy. We supposed the number of leading Unitarians to be not very large; and as to the great body of liberal Christians, or even the great body of the liberal party in Massachusetts, there is nothing said in our Review, which can be tortured into a charge of concealment, or hypocrisy, on their part. In short, nothing is said about them, in reference to the subject of concealment or hypocrisy. So grossly inaccurate was Mr. Channing, even after the errors of his Letter had been exposed. His inaccuracy unfortunately happens to be of a very mischievous kind; for many of his readers would suppose, if they relied upon his statement, that we had called them artful hypocrites, and would be highly exasperated, not only against us, but against Dr. Worcester and all who think as we do; when in fact we had said nothing about them, and had not even alluded to them in terms of reprehension. We therefore propose to Mr. Channing and his advocates the following question, which they are requested to ponder and answer at their leisure: In what page or pages of our Review do we assert, that "the great body of liberal Christians are guilty of hypocritical concealment of their sentiments, and behave in a base, cowardly and hypocritical manner?" If they cannot find any thing, (as they most assuredly cannot,) which bears even a remote likeness to this statement, let them confess that the charge is altogether unfounded; and let Mr. Channing, before he attempts to write controversy again, learn to state things as they are.

We will now repeat in substance what we *did* say, on the topic under consideration.

1. We represented the 'defection from orthodoxy,' in Boston and the vicinity, as having 'extended itself *silently and covertly*.' p. 241. This is undeniably true, and is warranted by the testimony of Dr. Freeman.

2. We declared it to be an 'artifice practised systematically by a *majority* of the clergymen, *who have led the way* in this apostate

sy, to inculcate the opinion, that they *did not differ materially* from their clerical brethren throughout the country.' p. 242. This is notoriously the fact. We produced a case to the purpose, and related several circumstances of it particularly, as an example of what has often taken place. It is remarkable, that though Mr. C. does not deny that these circumstances were related with perfect accuracy; though he probably knows that they were thus related; he is notwithstanding in very ill humor with us, for having produced a fact to verify our assertion. This is hard indeed. If we make any serious allegation against the liberal party, and do not produce some evidence in support of it, the truth of the allegation is vehemently denied. If, foreseeing this result, we bring forward the declarations of leading members of the liberal party; declarations made with great earnestness, and on a public occasion; we are accused of the "degrading practice of publishing what people say."* Thus, when we charged the liberal party with having patronized and circulated the Improved Version, the charge was very angrily repelled. We immediately produced a variety of facts, completely sufficient, in our opinion, to support the charge. The facts were not, and could not be, denied. They came into our possession unsought. And yet for stating incontrovertible facts, to refute a vehement charge of falsehood and calumny, we were attacked with nothing but sneers. We were represented as going about for the purpose of collecting *gossiping stories*. This disingenuous example Mr. C. has been willing to imitate.

We could state several facts in support of what we alleged as to the *artifice*, which has been practised. We will state *one*. Mr. Channing may call it a "story," if he pleases; it is at any rate the truth. When Mr. Codman was persecuted, because he would not pledge himself to exchange ministerial labors with certain members of the liberal party, it was a common saying in that party, that he was not authorized to suppose there was any great difference of opinion between him and his clerical neighbors; and that they all preached "those great truths and precepts," (to use the words of Mr. C.) "about which there is little contention."

If it should be said, that our crime lies in calling this conduct by the name of *artifice*, when it is no more than a charitable opinion respecting the differences among professed Christians; and when those, who express such an opinion, do in fact honestly think the differences between them and the orthodox to be comparatively unimportant; we answer: First; the declaration, that the persons in question *do not differ materially* from the orthodox, produces a very different effect from that which would be produced by a frank and full statement of the points of difference. This the liberal party know perfectly well. Hence their attachment to general and ambiguous terms. Secondly; these very persons show, in many instances, that they themselves think these differences to be vastly important. Thirdly; whenever the liberal party, in this or any other country, have deemed it expedient or necessary to avow their opinions openly, they insist strenuously on the amazing value of their

* Mr. Channing's Letter, p. 26

improvements in theology. We feel justified, therefore, in having used the word *artifice*.

3. We gave it as our judgment, that the conduct of the congregation at the Stone Chapel, "and of their minister, in coming out openly, and avowing their sentiments to the world, is vastly preferable to a hypocritical concealment of them." p. 251. We then intimated, that "other societies had not followed their example." That we were right in this intimation Mr. Wells plainly testifies.

4. We said, that Mr. Belsham's object, in publishing a certain letter, "was, doubtless, to chastise the Boston clergy for their cowardice in concealing their religious opinions." p. 260. That such was Mr. Belsham's object, no person who reads that letter, and Mr. Belsham's remarks upon it, can doubt for a moment. If we have been correctly informed, some of the Boston clergy felt this chastisement very keenly before our Review was written.

5. We intimated, that those advocates of Socinianism, who had clandestinely crept into orthodox churches, by forbearing to contradict the faith of these churches, and had then moulded their hearers by negative preaching, "were chargeable with cunning and policy;" that the apostles did not act thus; and that such conduct is "base and hypocritical," and "common honesty revolts at it." p. 260. The only question here must be, whether there have been any advocates of Socinianism, who have crept into orthodox churches in the manner here described. If there have been, we contend that the language, which we used, is not unwarrantably severe. In that case, we have nothing to retract, nor to repent of. We frankly avow, that we believe there have been such persons. Our proofs shall appear presently.

6. We said, "the idea that a minister believes the truths of the Gospel to be of infinite importance, and still conceals them, is incompatible either with fidelity or integrity." p. 261. This was a general observation, for the correctness of which we appeal to the consciences of Unitarians themselves.

We are not backward to admit, that the passages, to which we have now referred, contain language of strong censure and severe reprehension. Let us look a little at the documents which called forth this reprehension.

Dr. Freeman, after stating in his letter to Mr. Lindsey, that "the Unitarian doctrine was upon the increase," and that "he was acquainted with a number of ministers, who avowed and publicly preached it," goes on to say: "There are others *more cautious*, who content themselves with *leading their hearers*, by a course of rational but prudent sermons, *gradually and insensibly* to embrace it. Though this latter mode is not what I entirely approve, yet it produces good effects. For the people are thus kept out of the reach of false opinions, and are *prepared* for the impressions which will be made on them by more *bold and ardent* successors, when these *timid characters* are removed off the stage." This passage we quoted, at p. 252. Does it not plainly charge "these *timid characters*" with concealment of their opinions? We gave great offence by saying, that "many well-meaning people were *led in the dark*." What says Dr. F. about certain *more cautious* ministers, who con-

tented themselves with *leading their hearers gradually and insensibly* to embrace Unitarianism? These cautious men were expressly distinguished by him from others, 'who *avowed* and publicly preached' their sentiments. It appears, too, that Dr. Freeman's conscience could not approve of the conduct which he describes. Though these men were his friends; though they were embarked in the same cause with himself, and were really promoting that cause; yet he could not help seeing the obliquity of the path, in which they were travelling. In short, Dr. F. represents them as being essentially different from what their hearers supposed them to be; as being themselves conscious of this difference; as operating secretly, by keeping what he calls "false opinions" from the people of their charge; and as being induced to conceal their opinions by *timidity*. If Mr. Channing thinks such conduct fair, open, and honorable, we must be excused for forming and expressing a very different judgment.

Let us now look at Mr. Wells's letter, with a particular reference to the subject of concealment. Of Unitarianism, this gentleman declares, that while 'its tenets have spread very extensively in New England, he believes there is only one church *professedly* Unitarian.' What a picture is here! A sect has prevailed *very extensively* in a great country; and yet it comprises but a single congregation of persons, who make an *open profession* of their doctrines. Volumes could not say more. Mr. Channing contends, that Mr. Wells used the word Unitarian in its largest sense, as comprising all who are not Trinitarians; and Mr. Wells assures us, that such was the fact. Of course, Mr. Wells here testifies most explicitly, that but one congregation in New-England was *professedly* Anti-trinitarian; although the sect had prevailed very extensively, and although, as he immediately afterwards informs Mr. Belsham, 'most of the Boston clergy and respectable laymen are Unitarian,' i. e. Anti-trinitarian. Was there ever a system of concealment more perfect, and more universal than this?

Again; Mr. Wells declares, that 'most of the Boston clergy, and respectable laymen, do not think it *at all necessary* to conceal their sentiments on these subjects, but express them without the least hesitation, *when they judge it proper*.' We remark here, that Mr. Wells is obviously desirous of giving his correspondent a just view of the state of Unitarianism in this country. He is communicating information; he is *telling news*. His very declaration, that the Unitarians, clergy and laity, did not think it necessary to conceal their sentiments, imports either that they *had* thought it necessary, or that Mr. Belsham *supposed* they had. We believe it imports both; for if the Unitarians had *never* thought it necessary to conceal their sentiments, why does Mr. Wells use the present tense? Who ever thought, by the way, of saying that the orthodox do not think it necessary to *conceal* their sentiments? Who ever supposed they did? Whether in a majority or a minority, whether enjoying religious liberty or suffering under persecution, they have never thought it necessary to conceal their sentiments; but they *have* thought it necessary to avow, to preach, and to defend, their sentiments, as the truth of God, under every species of obloquy and

persecution, and at the hazard of their reputation, their personal comfort, and their lives. We submit it to the reader, whether Mr. Wells's expression does not imply further, that the Unitarians *would* conceal their sentiments, if they thought it at all necessary. But these gentlemen "express their sentiments without the least hesitation." When? Indeed, when should they, but—"WHEN THEY JUDGE IT PROPER?" Very well. But when *do* they judge it proper? Do these Boston clergy, of whom Mr. Wells speaks, *judge it proper* to express their sentiments, on the amazingly important subject of the Trinity, from the pulpit? Not they, if Mr. Wells is to be believed. We speak of the time when Mr. W.'s letter was written; i. e. March, 1812; for he expressly states, that, excepting the Chapel, "the controversy is seldom or *never* introduced into the pulpit." Will it be said, that Mr. Wells means only, that Unitarianism was not discussed in the pulpit in a controversial manner? We reply, that he must have meant more than this, for he afterwards says, that "the majority of those who are Unitarian are perhaps of these sentiments, without any *distinct consciousness* of being so." Of course, this majority of Unitarians never heard any thing about the subject, certainly nothing clear and distinct on it, from the pulpit. We think the inference altogether inevitable. People have usually thought, that the pulpit is the place, whence a minister's religious doctrines are to be learned; and the thought is not unnatural. It is generally taken for granted, that the apostles declared "all the counsel of God," in their public preaching. But in these days of improvement, a considerable number of clergymen abstain utterly from introducing into the pulpit a subject, which, as all admit, forms a most important part of the Christian scheme. Do these Unitarians *judge it proper* to disclose their sentiments through the medium of the press? Not under their own names. Mr. Wells says, "if publications make their appearance attacking Unitarian sentiments, they are commonly answered with spirit and ability." But the answers here referred to have always appeared either in the Anthology, or the Repository; and if any charge is brought against the liberal party, on account of pieces contained in these works, the very preferring of such a charge is resented as a high indignity; and the Anthology and Repository are laid aside with as little ceremony, as though they were bundles of old almanacs. If we express a conviction, that a particular paper was written by a certain individual, although it was notoriously and undeniably written by him, yet the very suggestion of such a thing is treated as though it were a slander cast upon the writer. Truly the liberal party must acquire more courage, or they can never expect to be acknowledged as the open, frank, and prosperous sect, which some of their late writings would persuade us that they are. They must learn not to be ashamed of their own works, the first moment these works are laid to their charge. In reference to the concealment, which has been practised, Mr. Wells says, "This state of things appears *so favorable* to the dissemination of correct sentiments, that I should perhaps regret a great degree of excitement in the public mind upon these subjects." We believe that

Mr. Wells and his party have judged very correctly, in supposing 'such a state of things' to be 'favorable to the dissemination' of their sentiments. This concealment will be less easily practised hereafter. The public will see what the event will be.

We shall dismiss the subject of concealment by a hasty reference to Mr. Belsham. This gentleman, the historian of Unitarianism in New England, the correspondent and friend of many individuals of the liberal party in Boston, evidently took it for granted, that a system of concealment prevailed in that party; a concealment which disguised itself under the plausible names of prudence, candor, and a love of peace, but which appeared to him nothing better than a cowardly abandonment of the truth, the result of a miserable time-serving policy. This was Mr. Belsham's view of the matter; and it must be confessed, that he had some opportunities of coming at the true state of the case. In giving the account of Mr. Sherman's dismissal, he animadverts, in strong terms, on the inconsistency of the *prudent council*, as he ironically terms it. For this account we refer the reader to p. 264. in our Review. In his reflections on Mr. Abbot's dismissal, Mr. Belsham is still more severe. "Thus again," says he, "we see the sacred cause of Christian truth, sacrificed to a *mean and temporizing* policy; and the faithful champion of truth, the amiable, useful, and beloved pastor, torn from his weeping flock, and consigned to poverty and solitude, for the sake of preserving a *hollow, deceitful*, temporary peace. But this cannot last long; nor can such a measure be approved by the great Head of the church." Let the liberal party look well to this piece of Unitarian history. Let them consider, that the council here described was a *liberal* council, and that their conduct is thus stigmatized by a liberal historian. What did this council sacrifice? "The sacred cause of Christian truth." To what did they sacrifice it? "To a **MEAN** and **TEMPORIZING** policy." What else did they sacrifice? "The faithful champion of truth." From what motives? "For the sake of preserving a *hollow, deceitful*, temporary peace." How does God regard such a proceeding? It cannot "be approved by the great Head of the church." Who says all this? Not the Panoplist Reviewer, but Mr. Belsham. Let our readers weigh the condemnation here pronounced, and judge whether it is not heavier than any which our Review contained.

Again: Mr. Belsham, in his comments on a letter which he had received from this country, goes upon the presumption, that concealment was systematically practised by the Boston clergy. He admits, that it cannot be expected, "upon the common principles of human nature," that "a body of clergy, nursed in the lap of ease and affluence," should make "an open profession of unpopular truth." "Yet still," says he, "it cannot reasonably be hoped, that truth will make any visible and rapid progress, till her advocates rise above the *fear of man*, and the *love of ease*, and are willing, with the apostles of Christ, and the reformers of every age, to forsake all and to sacrifice their dearest interests in her glorious cause." Mr. B. supposes himself to differ from his Boston friends, not only

in reference to the question of duty, but on the score of policy also. He thinks, that the open preaching of Unitarianism would accelerate its progress wonderfully. Mr. Wells thinks otherwise; and we are altogether of Mr. Wells's opinion. We therefore think it a point of immense importance, an acquisition of very great value, that many members of the liberal party have been driven from their concealment, and compelled to avow their sentiments. So far as our Review has been instrumental in producing this result, we have great reason to congratulate ourselves.

It is curious to observe how cautious Mr. Channing is not to offend Mr. Belsham by finding any fault with his representations. A book may be published throughout Great Britain, and parts of it may be reprinted and circulated throughout this country, which parts contain severe animadversions on the Unitarians among us; and yet all this is received with the most exemplary meekness, and without a word of contradiction or complaint. The writer may go on to accuse prominent men in the party of pursuing a *mean* and *temporizing* policy, and to bestow upon them a variety of indignant and reproachful epithets. All this he may do as a friend, and through anxiety for the cause in which he and they are embarked. But when *we* simply repeat his charges, and rely upon the accuracy of his representations, though they generally correspond with all our own knowledge on the subject, we are assailed in the most violent manner, as the basest of slanderers. In regard to the charge of concealment and hypocrisy, let Mr. Channing settle his accounts with Dr. Freeman, Mr. Wells, and Mr. Belsham; let him come forward to the public, and not fear to repeat the words from the mouths of these gentlemen; let him take paragraph by paragraph, and sentence by sentence, and show, if he can, that these three witnesses prove the liberal party to be frank, open, bold, and conscientious, in the public avowal of their sentiments; and then, but not till then, let him complain of our statements.

Thus have we examined all the most important charges, which Mr. Channing brought against us. We have stated the true meaning of the offensive passages in our Review, and that meaning we have felt both able and willing to defend. As a strong confirmation of the positions which we have taken, it may be mentioned, that Dr. Worcester and the Reviewer in the Vermont Adviser, each examining the subject for himself, came to the same result, and completely vindicated our Review from the charge of falsehood and misrepresentation.

We now proceed to examine the controversy between Mr. Channing and Dr. Worcester. It may appear to some of our readers, that we have occupied too many pages with an exposure of Mr. Channing's unadvised and unfounded charges against us. But we ask them to consider, whether something was not due to our own character, thus violently assailed by a clergyman of high standing in his party, a man who had no small share of reputation depending on the validity of his accusations. We are sanguine enough to suppose, also, that the further disclosure of the views, designs, and

character of the liberal party, which the present article has already made, will not be useless; and that candid men cannot help perceiving, that all our disclosures concerning this party have been made with caution, deliberation, and a sacred regard to truth. Our friends will also remember, that when a complete answer is attempted, it should be really what it professes to be, and not a hurried discussion; and that false charges may be made in half a page, or even in half a sentence, which it must take many pages to refute particularly and effectually. Should a similar attack be made upon the Panoplist hereafter, it is probable that a very brief notice of it will be sufficient.

The calm and dispassionate manner, in which Dr. Worcester examines the charge of concealment, is truly admirable, and must have been prodigiously mortifying to Mr. C. and his liberal friends. Our readers shall be favored with the following specimen.

"It does, however, appear to me very clear, that Dr. Freeman, Mr. Wells, and Mr. Belsham did suppose, and that in the documents on which the Reviewer principally relies as his vouchers, they do represent, that liberal ministers, and other liberal gentlemen have judged it proper, not to make ordinarily a free and full disclosure of their sentiments: that they have in fact thought it expedient to temporize. Whether, in this opinion of you and your brethren, those gentlemen are correct or not, you must have been apprised, that the opinion is not peculiar to them, but very extensively prevalent: prevalent, not among those only, whom you would consider your adversaries, but also among your friends. Hundreds and hundreds of times have I heard it uttered from various quarters, with various expressions of approbation and disapprobation; and never, in any debate or conversation, as I recollect, have I heard the truth of it denied, or called in question. It seems indeed to have been received as an established, uncontested fact, that ministers of the liberal class were not accustomed to be unreserved and explicit in the public avowal and declaration of their sentiments. I confess to you, Sir, that I had so received it; nor did I ever imagine that in so receiving it, there was any thing injurious or uncharitable: for I did suppose that you and your liberal brethren held it as a maxim, founded upon reasons satisfactory to your own minds, that a degree of reserve and concealment, greater or less according to circumstances, was prudent, and justifiable, and praiseworthy. In this supposition I have been from time to time strengthened, by conversations with respectable individuals of the class, and not a little confirmed by what I have occasionally heard from the pulpit. I have now in very fresh remembrance some sentiments to this effect, delivered in a sermon which I heard at an ordination in Boston a few months ago; and in which the preacher very distinctly, and with considerable amplification, held forth that, though in some places it might be well, and "contribute to the faith and virtue of the people," for a minister openly and plainly to declare his sentiments, yet in other places it would not be prudent or proper; and in regard to this, the gentleman then ordained was affectionately and earnestly advised to regulate himself, according to the habits of thinking and feeling, the prejudices or freedom from prejudice, which he should find to prevail among his people." pp. 17, 18.

Dr. W. then expresses his surprise at Mr. Channing's denial of concealment, on the part of himself and his brethren. This denial, however, is accounted for, on the assumption of Mr. C. that he and his friends perpetually urge those great truths and precepts about

which there is little contention; while, as Dr. W. alleges, 'they studiously refrain from encountering the opinions of any of the various denominations of Christians, who differ from them.' Dr. W. then urges, with irresistible force, that according to Mr. Channing's own account of the matter, the liberal clergy abstain from expressing their opinions on 'any of the primary, any of the peculiar doctrines and institutions of the Gospel.' This is enough to settle the question of concealment finally and forever.

Mr. C. had said, "to believe with Mr. Belsham is no crime;" and yet Mr. C. admits Mr. Belsham to be in great errors. Further, Mr. C. has said, in a printed sermon, that 'he was unwilling to believe that infidelity can never be traced to causes, which may absolve it from guilt.' In other words, infidelity may be perfectly innocent. Dr. W. appeals to Scripture on this subject; and we need not say, that Mr. C.'s position must instantly fall under severe condemnation, if Scripture is permitted to decide. Dr. W. then urges the practice of the apostles, and the estimation in which they held religious error, as being totally different from the system recommended by the liberal party and their champion.

The third topic of Mr. Channing's letter is occupied with the subject of the *separation*, which we had pressed upon the orthodox. We have not been willing to consider this topic as belonging exclusively to ourselves; and have purposely left it to be discussed as a part of the more general controversy. Mr. Channing says, indeed, referring to our Review, that he believes "this is the first instance, in which Christians have been deliberately called to deny us [the Unitarians] the Christian name and privileges." It has been an involuntary exclamation, when this passage has been read by persons at a distance, "Mr. Channing must be a very ignorant man!" We answer, not so ignorant as he is passionate and unguarded. It does truly evince a most deplorable inattention to what is taking place, and has always been taking place since the Christian era, to say, that the name and privileges of Christians have never been denied to Unitarians of any class, till our Review set the example. Perhaps Mr. C. would confine his assertion to this country. Very well. Let him look at this country. Several years ago, the General Association of Connecticut, a body which represents all the congregational clergy in that state, resolved, that no clergyman ought to exchange ministerial labors with any man, claiming to be a Christian minister, if he denied the Divinity of Christ. Did not the Anthology complain of this decision? But Mr. C. did not read the Anthology. Again; the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States resolved, two or three years ago, that baptism, administered by a Socinian, was null and void; and the resolution was taken, as a practical consequence of the opinion, that heretics of this class are not to be received as Christians. Was not this decision loudly complained of by the Boston clergy? and was not Mr. C. one of the complainers? It is beyond question the fact, that the orthodox generally do consider many of the clergy, who are members of the liberal party, as

exerting an influence hostile to Christianity; as leading their hearers away from the truth; as depriving the pious of the great sources of gratitude and consolation, and imparting a vain confidence and presumption to careless sinners. That all the members of the party, and all who are claimed as belonging to it, exert precisely the same kind of influence, nobody supposes; but that the general influence of the party is of the unhappy and mischievous character just described must certainly be admitted, if the doctrines of the Reformation are the doctrines of the Bible. The orthodox have examined the Scriptures for themselves, as we presume they have a right to do; and they are unwilling to give up the plain declarations of the word of God, the testimony of their own consciences, and the result of all their observation and experience, on the lofty assumptions of any set of men. They conceive the doctrines of the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, the entire depravity of man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, the absolute and universal government of God, justification by faith alone, the unalterable state of the righteous and the wicked in the world to come, and many other doctrines connected with these, to be clearly taught in the Bible. They conceive, also, that these doctrines derive every possible confirmation and support from the history of the church and the world, and from all that takes place within and around them. Thus conceiving, they cannot but regard the subverters of these doctrines as the subverters of the Gospel, and the promulgators of another Gospel, which, being essentially different from the true in all its fundamental articles, is not to be received as the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Mr. Channing seems not to know how to discuss the question of separation on its merits; but resorts instantly to those topics, which are calculated to awaken the passions of his friends and admirers. There is scarcely an attempt at argument, if we except a quotation from Dr. Campbell on Heresy, a passage of which the liberal party are immoderately fond. It seems to contain the sum total of their learning, and their reasoning, on this subject. They have published it, in substance at least, several times. They may rest assured, however, that Dr. Campbell's decision is not calculated to terrify any man, who can read the New Testament, and think for himself. So far as it clashes with the practice of the orthodox, or with the course recommended in our Review, it can be easily refuted. We have no room to examine it here, but may take up the subject on some future occasion.

Dr. Worcester discusses the call for separation with distinguished ability.

"It is to be lamented," says he, "that on a subject of this serious and momentous kind, you should have thought it proper so entirely to dispense with argument, and with all the scriptural considerations which, in relation to this subject, so forcibly press themselves upon the conscience and the heart; and to indulge so freely in vague declamation, poignant invective, and fervid appeal to popular prejudices and passions. I know full well, and too many know, that this is the way to strike the minds of that great majority of mankind, to whom thought and reflection are irksome; the method best adapted for the support

of a bad cause. I am fully aware of your advantages in this respect. But, Sir, a minister of Jesus Christ should esteem it a higher honor and a nobler achievement, to enlighten the understanding and correct the conscience of a single individual, than to rouse the passions and inflame the prejudices of thousands.—Declamation is always, for a very obvious reason, difficult to answer. Yours however, under the present head, is evidently bottomed on several *assumptions*, which I deem utterly inadmissible, and some of the principal of which I propose to consider." pp. 26, 27.

The first assumption considered by Dr. W. is this: "That the points of doctrine, upon which Mr. C. and his liberal brethren differ from their opponents, are comparatively small and trivial; not *practical*, but speculative merely, and such as do not materially affect Christian character." This assumption is shewn to be utterly unfounded. The creed of the higher classes of Unitarians is briefly compared with that of the orthodox, and proved to be fundamentally different; and the difference clearly appears to be much of a practical nature. The scheme of Mr. Belsham is then considered; for Mr. Channing had pleaded for Mr. Belsham with no less confidence than for himself. This scheme is represented as "another Gospel" than that, which Paul preached; or at any rate, as a diverse Gospel from that which the orthodox receive. If one be true, the other must be false; so that there can be no foundation for communion between the adherents to these totally different systems.

The second assumption, which Dr. Worcester examines, is, "That every separation between professed Christians is unjustifiable; a criminal *schism*, the guilt of which is chargeable upon those who insist upon it as requisite." p. 29. The nature of schism is here inquired into; and the discussion of this topic closes with the two following paragraphs.

"How, indeed, is the fellowship for which you plead to be maintained? Upon this point you and your liberal brethren have taken care that we should be pretty fully informed. The orthodox churches must give up their creeds and covenants, their Psalms and Hymns and Doxologies; must cease to insist on, as important, the great doctrines which they now hold to be fundamental and essential to the Christian faith; must exclude from their pulpits all mysterious and controverted doctrines,—all that are not included in what is fashionably called liberal or rational Christianity; must consent in a word, to have their preaching and worship conducted on such principles, and in such a manner, as will not disturb the minds of liberal Christians, or Unitarians of any class!—Is not this, Sir, precisely the way most distinctly marked out, and most strenuously insisted on, in your periodical publications, in your ordination sermons, and in all your discourses and conversations on this subject? If the orthodox ministers and churches will only consent to all this, the thing is done; all will be love, and peace, and fellowship. That is, if they will consent to yield up as unscriptural or unimportant the doctrines of faith and the principles of worship, which they now hold most essential to Christian character, devotion, and practice,—to hold it "no crime to believe as Mr. Belsham believes," and, to worship as he worships; and thus cease to be orthodox, or in any respect materially different from those called liberal Christians; all the difficulty will be removed, and the way will be open and easy for an established and permanent fellowship between them and Unitarians of all degrees.—Yes, Sir; and if Unitarians would cease to be Unitarians, and become orthodox Christians, the way would be equally unobstructed.

"But here lies the difficulty. The orthodox ministers and churches will not consent thus to yield up their faith and their worship: and from the earnest and abundant labor and pains which you and your liberal brethren have employed, to bring them to these terms, it is manifest that, unless they will consent, you do not yourselves suppose there can be fellowship between you and them. Because they do not consent, you continually charge them with being bigoted, illiberal, uncharitable; and now seem disposed to charge them even with schism and heresy. But, Sir, if on account of their steadfast adherence to their faith and worship a separation and non-fellowship ensue, does it not deeply concern you, as well as them, very seriously to consider on which side the guilt will lie? Unquestionably, notwithstanding any thing which you have said of your own, or quoted from Dr. Campbell, it must lie on that side, which the Redeemer and King of Zion shall judge to have removed itself from the foundation of the apostles and prophets." pp. 30, 31.

The sentence, with which this passage concludes, is well worthy of being considered by Mr. C. and by all latitudinarians. The question, "What is schism?" will be decided, not by a majority of votes; not by men of any class or character; particularly not by men, who rely on their own reason as sufficient to direct them in the way to heaven, and who seem to take great credit to themselves for kindness, when they make the path of life so broad, that nearly all may fancy themselves travelling in it: but this momentous question will be decided, according to the immutable word of God, without giving up one iota to the plausible declamation, or earnest wishes, of self-deceivers. How idle, then, is it, how arrogant, how presumptuous, to attempt to settle such a question, by a clamorous appeal to the expectations and hopes, the wishes and prejudices, of a narrow circle of persons, who may choose to call themselves liberal and enlightened. The only rational and scriptural way of examining any subject, which relates to the great doctrines and duties of the Bible, is by a sober appeal to the Bible itself. We admire a passage quoted from Kirwan's Sermons, in the review of that work by the Christian Observer. "But in the midst of this scene of continual revolution, the Scriptures remain unchangeable as the Source from which they sprung. Such as the first Christians received and understood them, such are they at this hour; and such will they be when the heavens and the earth have passed away. Neither the force nor corruption of times can render them more austere or more indulgent."

The last assumption, which Dr W. takes up, is this: "That it can be only from a bigoted, uncharitable, and malignant spirit,—a "proud, censorious, and overbearing temper," that a separation can be proposed." p. 31. Here Dr. W. remarks, that Mr. C. is directly at variance with Mr. Belsham and others of the same party, who loudly demand a separation. He then exposes the abuse of the word charity, the sophistry to which this abuse leads, and advances to this question: "Would it conduce more to the promotion of truth for the believers in the true Gospel to hold fellowship with the believers in another Gospel, than to separate from them?" It will not be easy for Mr. C. or any other man to answer the reasoning on this topic. If an answer should be attempted, we recommend that the first point to be established should be this: That it is impossible

for any man who *says* he is a Christian, and appears to lead a moral life, to embrace fundamental errors. When this point shall be clearly established, it will follow, that a large part of the New Testament is unmeaning, unreasonable, and of no authority whatever. At this stage, in the course of their descent, Mr. Belsham and his particular friends have long since arrived. When the New Testament is arraigned, tried, condemned, and rejected by such men, they may easily imagine themselves to have proved any thing, which may be flattering to their pride, or grateful to their feelings.

Dr. W. closes the discussion of this topic with the following pathetic expressions.

"In the mean time, Charity, heaven-born Charity, must be allowed to weep and lament over the inroads of error and the desolations of Zion. Yes, Sir, charmed not at all with the so loudly chaunted praises of increased "light,"—abashed not at all by the disdainful sneers at imputed fanaticism,—she will weep—that her adored Lord is denied his divine honors, in the beloved city of our solemnities, where our fathers saw his glory, and delighted to celebrate his wonderful works of love and mercy." p. 35.

Mr. Channing did not think it proper to be silent on the appearance of Dr. Worcester's First Letter. The flame, which his own letter to Mr. Thacher had kindled, was deadened, if not entirely quenched, by the flood of reasoning and eloquence so readily poured forth. It would not do to be silent. Something must be said. But we think most attentive readers will be convinced, that Mr. C. began his Remarks with a mortifying consciousness of inferiority to his opponent; a consciousness, which no reasonable man will condemn him for feeling. As he advances in his discussion, he writes with fluency and animation, though with a most deplorable deficiency of argument. Not one of the great points of Dr. Worcester's Letter is taken up carefully, and examined leisurely, and with a view to produce conviction. The utmost that Mr. C. appears to have aimed at, was, to escape without disgrace from the contest. Two apologies may be made for him. One is, that Dr. Worcester's Letter could not be answered, as such a production should be, (even on the supposition that its main positions were capable of being answered,) in a hasty pamphlet, designed to make a popular impression. The other is, that Mr. C. is most eminently unfitted to become a controversial writer. He wants the patience, the accuracy, the coolness, the sagacity, the powers of discrimination, which are indispensable to the able management of a controversy. On this subject, we suppose there is but one opinion, among those who are qualified to judge, whether friends or opposers.

The great points of Dr. W.'s Letter were, as our readers have seen, a vindication of our Review from the charge of falsehood; an examination of Mr. C.'s declaration, that to believe in error is no crime; an exposure of the concealment practised by the liberal party; and a detection of the various assumptions, which had afforded Mr. C. topics of such fervid declamation. As to the vindication of our Review, Mr. C. confesses that he had fallen into a slight inaccuracy

cy; but repeats substantially the same charges as before; charges which we have shewn to be unfounded. In one thing we cordially unite with him; that is, in referring the reader to the Review itself. As to the other points, not one of them is fairly met. We will give a few specimens of Mr. C.'s entire failure, to say the least, on subjects of very great consequence. Dr. Worcester inquires,

"Is not Mr. Belsham's Gospel, as set forth in his creed, *another Gospel*, than that which Paul preached? If you are not willing to admit this; yet surely you cannot hesitate a moment to admit, that it is another, than that which is held by orthodox Christians,—which is preached by orthodox ministers:—essentially different in every particular from the foundation to the top stone. One or the other of these schemes, then, must be what St. Paul denominates "*another Gospel*," and against which, and its abettors, he solemnly pronounces his apostolic anathema. The leading doctrines of Mohammed are not more diverse from the orthodox views of Christianity, than are those which you would have us hold in our fellowship. The followers of Mohammed believe in Jesus Christ as a good man, and a great prophet; and are accustomed to regard him, I believe, with as high veneration, as are the lower Unitarians." pp. 28, 29.

In the passage here alluded to, St. Paul says, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man [any one, whether man, or celestial spirit] preach any other Gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed." It has been the fashion with writers of the liberal party to soften, and explain away, every scriptural expression, which seems harsh to their ears. But the mildest interpretation, which we remember to have seen, of the phrase, *let him be accursed*, is this; "let him be separated from you; hold no communion with him: acknowledge him not as a Christian teacher, or a Christian man." We have, then, an apostolical command to withhold communion from those who teach "*another Gospel*." How does Mr. C. interpret the passage? He avoids any direct notice of it, though Dr. Worcester had formally cited it, in a preceding page. But the substance of what Mr. C. has to say on this subject, is contained in the following sentences:

"We do not pass sentence like apostles on many subjects of controversy among Christians, for this very plain reason—that we are *not* apostles. We are, what we labor never to forget, uninspired and fallible men; and we are apt to distrust ourselves, when persons of intelligence and piety, see cause to differ from us in the interpretation of Scripture. We dare not preach like apostles, on points which have perplexed and divided men of the profoundest thought and the purest lives; and we know from the genius and leading principles of Christianity, that these points are not, and cannot be, essential to salvation." pp. 11, 12.

What is this to the purpose of rejecting those, who preach another Gospel? Dr. W. did not say, that ministers at the present day *are* apostles; nor did he urge any man to form new rules for the government of the church, and deliver them with the authority of an apostle. All he insisted on was, that Christians should obey the plain and express directions of one who *was* an apostle, who

wrote under the influence of divine inspiration, and who delivered an authoritative rule of conduct for the church in every age. We do not hesitate to say, that the turn which Mr. Channing attempted to give to this subject is one of the most miserable subterfuges, to which a vanquished and forlorn disputant ever had recourse. St. Paul was not informing the churches of Galatia what *he* was about to do, or what he had done, in the execution of his apostolical commission, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He commanded *them* what to do, in the exercise of a sound discretion and with a pure conscience; and through them he has commanded Christians of the present day what to do, in reference to any, who subvert the Gospel of Christ. Yes, he directed the plain, uneducated Christians of Galatia, and the same class of Christians in every age, to reject in the most decisive manner, every teacher of another Gospel. God himself has taught mankind, in this passage, that plain Christians, who have heard the true Gospel clearly preached, are *able* to distinguish it from any other Gospel; that they are *bound* thus to distinguish it; and that, far from being uncharitable in withholding communion from the teachers of another Gospel, this is a duty from which they cannot be excused. Mr. C. speaks of ‘points, on which men of the profoundest thought, and the purest lives, are divided;’ and which ‘we know,” says he, “are not, and cannot be, essential to salvation.” How does Mr. Channing *know*, that none of those points, ‘on which men of the profoundest thought, and the purest lives have been divided, are essential to salvation?’ What our readers may think on the subject we know not, but for ourselves, we set very lightly by this *knowledge* of Mr. Channing’s. Before it can be entitled to a moment’s consideration, Mr. C. must produce a revocation of the Apostle Paul’s authority, and a substitution of his own: for it would be difficult to state a more absolute contradiction, than that which exists between him and the Apostle. Mr. Channing would establish this infallible rule, in determining what doctrines are non-essential to salvation; viz. that every doctrine, concerning which men of the profoundest thought and the purest lives have been divided, is to be reckoned in this class; so that none of these doctrines, nor all of them put together, can constitute “another Gospel.” But what says the Apostle? The passage which we have quoted, may be paraphrased thus: “Though I myself, commissioned, received, and accredited as an apostle, should attempt to subvert the Gospel which I first preached to you;—though a celestial spirit, from the regions of light and glory, should promulgate another Gospel:—you are bound immediately to reject, as the case may be, either me or him, as a false teacher, a reprobate, lying under the curse of God. Should any one, I repeat the weighty decision;—should *any* one, whatever his character may be; how great so ever his attainments, his eloquence, his zeal; however pure and holy his life may seem; though he appear to unite every desirable quality, from the intellectual power and dignity of the highest seraph to the amiable docility of the loveliest child; yet, if he preaches a different Gospel from that which you have already

received, he is to be rejected as a false teacher, a reprobate, lying under the curse of God. And whether he does preach a different Gospel, or not, you, plain Christians of Galatia, are to be the judges, without relying on his own plausible declarations, or those of his abettors. The question is decided, once for all, that the doctrines of every future preacher of the Gospel are to be judged of, not by his pretensions, not by his attainments, not by his apparent character, but by the unerring rule of Divine Revelation." What becomes of Mr. Channing's rule about men of the profoundest thought, and the purest lives?

The same apostle says, in another passage, "Let God be true, but every man a liar;" that is, as we understand it, "Let the plain declarations, which God has made in his word, be received according to their obvious import; and let every man, who contradicts these declarations, be esteemed as a liar, a false teacher, a contemner of God's word, whatever the pretensions of such a man may be, and however distinguished he may appear for integrity, sincerity, and sanctity." Which is to be followed, the Apostle, or Mr. Channing?

Happy is it for mankind, that the rule which Mr. Channing delivers with such confidence, is pointedly condemned in the Bible. If adopted and acted upon, it would prove an *ignis fatuus*, leading into endless perplexity and difficulty, and abandoning its followers in the "great Serbonian bog" of universal skepticism. The direct tendency, if not the intention, of sanctioning this rule is, to persuade the world, that there can be little danger in following, where men of the profoundest thought and the purest lives have led the way. All that a person has to do, then, in order to prove the safety of the doctrines which he holds, is to find some man, who is worthy to be acknowledged as a file-leader. The only inquiries to be settled are these two: Is the leader in question a man of profound thought? Is he a man of a pure life? These questions once answered in the affirmative, it is impossible that any doctrine, which this leader rejects, should be essential to salvation.

It is not difficult for a man to acquire the reputation of a deep-thinker, especially with his own followers. And when the reputation is once acquired, it will be perpetuated in the sect, so long as the spirit of propagandism exists. It may justly be admitted, indeed, that the founders of most sects have been men of uncommon talents, of considerable acquirements, and of assiduous study. They have no doubt generally been well persuaded of the truth of their schemes, and heartily devoted to them. But all this does not prove, that their schemes have been any thing better than "wind and confusion."

Nor does it imply the existence of true religion, to have obtained the reputation of leading a pure life. We think it very easy for an infidel to lead as good a life, as that which has been in fact exhibited, by many professed Christians, who have been canonized, and almost idolized, by their friends and followers.

Let us see, for a moment, how an inquiry after truth would appear, if conducted upon these principles. A certain man embraces a doctrine, which is founded in dangerous error. He is warned of his danger; but replies, "I have no fears; this doctrine has been embraced by men of the profoundest thought and the purest lives." Suppose the fact to be, that his leaders are men of stupid minds and corrupt lives; how is he to be convinced of it? Whoever undertakes the task of convincing him, will run the hazard of being reproached as a bigot, a calumniator, an unauthorized, and censorious judge of his fellow Christians. Thus the controversy, instead of resolving itself into a scriptural inquiry, degenerates into a miserable altercation about the personal character of certain leaders, who lived centuries ago, and thousands of miles from the scene of controversy; and whose character, if they were living, and on the spot, could be justly estimated by no other than the Omniscient. Of all questions, those, which relate to the personal character of individuals, who are hated by one party and the favorites of another, are the most unlikely to be amicably settled. In the first place, all men have faults, which the eagle eyes of their enemies will be very apt to discover and magnify. Secondly; many virtues are changed into faults by the prejudices of an adversary. Thirdly; most men possess qualities, which bear some resemblance to virtues, and which the voice of friendship, or of favoritism, can eulogize as the most splendid of virtues.

If a reputation for purity of life in a teacher is to be the passport for all the doctrines which he teaches, so far as to assure his followers, that there can be nothing dangerous in these doctrines, then the question, *What is purity of life?* will furnish a subject of endless debate. On no question whatever would there be a more radical difference of opinion. Must the purity of a teacher equal that of Dr. Price, who, as Mrs. Barbauld is confident, might demand admission into heaven as a matter of justice? Or will it be sufficient to come up to the standard of Hume, who, in the opinion of Adam Smith, approached "as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit?" Or shall Rousseau be the model, who, after a life of impiety, vice, and infidelity, boasted that he was about to surrender his soul pure into the hands of his Maker?

It has always been the policy of Unitarians to praise each other most extravagantly, as being possessed of every intellectual and moral endowment. The reason of this policy is very obvious. If the praise, which they lavish so freely, is not allowed to be just, they exclaim, What bigotry! What illiberality! What an attachment to sect that must be, which can see nothing good out of its own pale! If the justice of their praise is in any respect admitted, or even if the subject of personal character is passed over in silence, they dwell long and often on the question, "Is it possible that such great men, such good men, the very best men in the world, can be fundamentally erroneous?" In either of these alternatives, their appeal is not in vain to the passions and feelings of a large class of

readers. Yet these are the writers, who profess to decry a reliance on human authority!

To leave this topic, on which we have dwelt longer than our limits can well afford, Dr. Worcester had used the word *orthodox*, as it is commonly used, as a term of distinction, not of praise. Mr. C. endeavors to take an advantage of this use of the word, understands it as a term of praise, and seems to make a very serious business of it. As the meaning of Dr. W. is perfectly apparent, we really wonder what could induce Mr. C. to refuse his antagonist the common and proper use of a very common word. Drowning men catch very eagerly at straws.

Mr. Channing says, p. 23, that the doctrine of the Trinity "has for ages perplexed and distressed the mind of almost every reflecting Christian." This is a specimen of the loose, random manner, in which Mr. C. customarily ventures his assertions. We are confident, that he labors under a great mistake on this subject. We have been personally acquainted with many reflecting Christians, in different conditions of life, from the aged, learned, pious divine, or the venerable, contemplative matron, to the thoughtful, devout farmer or mechanic; from persons who resemble the late Dr. Rodgers and the late Mrs. Graham of New-York to those who are not unlike the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain; and we have not found them distressed in the manner described by Mr. Channing. We therefore utterly discredit his statement. It appears by Dr. Worcester's Third Letter, that the doctrine of the Trinity does not 'distress his mind;' and we know, that 'many reflecting Christians' most cordially feel as he does, and unite with him in considering this doctrine, as a theme of delightful meditation, as a source of perpetual and holy joy.

Unitarians have always endeavored to make a display of their own numbers; and, in doing this, they have often set all truth and decency at defiance. When the subject of their great numbers is exhausted, they attempt to persuade their readers, that most professed Trinitarians are in fact Unitarians, if they only knew how to tell what they believe; and, when driven from this ground, they dwell upon the distressed and comfortless condition of Trinitarians. But these arts, separately or conjointly, will not answer the purpose intended. We mean not to deny, that the minds of individuals have been distressed on the subject of the Trinity. That is probably the case with most of those, who ultimately become Unitarians. But this distress can be traced to other causes, than the mysterious nature of the doctrine itself; and facts are far, very far, from warranting the broad assertion, which we have just quoted.

Mr. Channing says, p. 27, that the precept controversy "primarily relates to the moral character of the great body of liberal Christians." This is another random assertion, for which there is not the least color, or pretence. Neither our Review, nor Dr. Worcester's Letter, said a single word, directly or implicitly, about the "moral character of the great body of liberal Christians." We are sorry that Mr. C. had not taken some pains not to make

groundless assertions; especially such as have a direct tendency to arouse the passions of this "great body of liberal Christians" without any reason.

In answer to Dr. Worcester's declaration, addressed to Mr. Channing, "The Savior whom you acknowledge is infinitely inferior to ours," Mr. C. says, p. 26, "We believe that GOD saves us by his son Jesus Christ, in whom he dwells, and through whom he bestows pardon and eternal life. A higher Savior we do not know, and cannot conceive." To this passage Dr. W. very properly rejoins: "I did suppose you would yet acknowledge JESUS CHRIST to be your SAVIOR. Your declaration, however, if it has any pertinency, plainly imports that you do not." Mr. C. endeavors to evade the force of this rejoinder, in the Note to his second series of Remarks. It is impossible, however, to make out this evasion. Whatever Mr. C. intended, his language clearly disclaimed Jesus Christ as his Savior; and the declarations which he has quoted from Scripture, as his justification, are not at all similar to the one in question.

Mr. Channing's defence of what he had said concerning our Review rests entirely upon the assumption, that he had stated nothing more than the "impression," which it made on his own mind, and which it had a tendency to make on the minds of readers at large. He implicitly admits, that a "verbal critic, with a dictionary in his hand," might make a great deal less of it, than he had actually made. In other words, we were not to be judged by the *language* which we had used; but by the *impressions*, which men excessively goaded and irritated by our disclosures, and greatly excited by imparting their angry feelings to each other, had hastily received from it. Mr. C. applies the same rule of interpretation to Dr. Worcester's Letter. He accordingly sums up, in a very obnoxious form, what he states to be "the obvious import of the concluding part of" that letter. As we have not room to enter into particulars, we do not quote the passage. Soon after Mr. Channing's Remarks appeared, Dr. W. addressed to him a Second Letter. A prominent part of this letter is occupied in proving, that Mr. C. had made "a flagrant misstatement," where he professes to give the "obvious import" of the First Letter; and in calling upon him "to retract." After correcting this misstatement, and several others of minor consequence, Dr. W. proceeds to show, at some length the radical difference between Trinitarians and Unitarians. He shows, that the orthodox believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, and that Unitarians disallow such an inspiration; that the orthodox believe in the doctrine of the Trinity; that they hold this doctrine to be fundamentally important; that they believe in the divinity of Christ, in his incarnation, in his expiatory sacrifice, and in justification by faith alone; while Unitarians reject these doctrines, or entirely explain them away.

At the commencement of this Letter, Dr. W. expresses his deliberate judgment, in which he had the concurrence of all with whom he had conversed, that Mr. C. had not directly met him at a single

point, shown him to be incorrect in a single statement, nor refuted him in a single position, or argument; and, in a word, that Mr. C.'s Remarks were no *real* answer to his First Letter.' Dr. W. then inquires, by what means Mr. C. had been able to give his Remarks the *appearance* and *effect* of an answer; for that it had that appearance and that effect, in the view of some persons, is admitted. By a very clear and powerful analysis Dr. W. shows, that the Remarks of Mr. C. owed whatever efficacy they possessed, to the *imputation of a bad intention*; to his representing Dr. W.'s Letter as *light and trifling*; to his *diverting the reader's attention from the point and the argument*; and to *misstatement*.

This Second Letter is written with moderation, solemnity, and great ability. It bears evident testimony, not only to the conscientiousness of the writer, but to his care, patience, and diligence, as well as to his profound veneration for the Scriptures, and his habit of fair and close investigation.

Mr. Channing, having been called upon in a solemn manner to retract, judged it expedient to publish Remarks on Dr. Worcester's Second Letter. He attempts to vindicate his interpretation of the obvious import of the First Letter, by a particular examination of several passages. His grand rule of interpretation continues to be the "impression," which a writing makes on his mind, and the minds of his friends. He makes some further developments of the creed of the liberal party in this country, and proceeds to consider what he is pleased to call "the methods of rendering Unitarians odious." These methods are, according to Mr. C. 'painting in the strongest colors the differences between Unitarians and Trinitarians;' 'representing Unitarians as obliged by their sentiments to give up the doctrine of the atonement;' 'asserting that they disbelieve the doctrine of the Trinity because it is mysterious;' 'addressing the fears of Christians;' and charging Unitarians 'with attempting to conceal the differences between themselves and Trinitarians.' The Remarks are concluded with a consideration of what Mr. C. calls "the system of exclusion and denunciation." On this subject, he goes through the common topics of Unitarian declamation, with rather uncommon zeal and spirit. Though he has nothing, which can be called fair argument, he occasionally rises into the region of eloquence. He concludes with an earnest attempt to dissuade from an open, formal separation between Trinitarians and Unitarians. Not a few of his reasonings and assertions are contradictory to each other; but, as a whole, the pamphlet was calculated to produce some effect upon the party in whose behalf it was written. All the great points in Dr. Worcester's Letters were omitted, or evaded, as before; and recourse is had by Mr. C. to his former subterfuge, that Christians of the present day are not obliged to reject the preachers of "another Gospel," because these Christians are not themselves apostles: that is, Christians are not obliged to obey a plain rule of Scripture, because they are not themselves inspired.

Dr. Worcester's Third Letter is one of the ablest pamphlets, which any controversy has produced. It ought to be generally circulated and read; and we are persuaded it cannot be read, without producing a deep and lasting effect highly favorable to the cause of truth. The vindication of Mr. C.'s misstatement, which that gentleman had attempted, was quickly and effectually despatched; and Dr. W. advanced to an examination of the further development of the creed, which Mr. C. had given, as common to himself and his particular friends. After quoting a passage from this creed, Dr. W. proceeds, in the following eloquent strain.

"With these 'liberal Christians,' then, it is a matter of utter uncertainty, of endless doubt, and, it would seem, of cold and lofty indifference, who the Savior of the world is!—whether he is a created, or an uncreated being; whether he existed from eternity, or begun to exist in time; whether he is a God, who, though inferior to the 'supreme God,' has yet a rightful claim to religious worship, or only their fellow servant, to whom no divine honors belong! From other passages, on which I shall have occasion in another place to remark, it appears that the same uncertainty, and doubt, and indifference exist with these same 'liberal Christians,' in regard to what Jesus Christ has done for them:—whether he died to expiate their sins with blood of inestimable merit, or whether 'in consequence' merely 'of what he has done and suffered, the punishment of sin is averted from the penitent;' as it may have been, in consequence of the sufferings and labors, the instructions and intercessions of Paul and other good men, by whose means sinners have been brought to repentance!—Of course, there must be similar uncertainty, doubt, and indifference, as to the obligations which they owe to him; as to the love and trust, the thanks and honors to which he is entitled.—Do they then honor the Son, even as they honor, or should honor the Father? They do not know who or what the Son is. Are they blessed in putting their trust in him? They do not know to what extent, or for what purposes he is to be trusted. Do they delight to join in the heavenly anthem, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing?' They do not know that he *is* worthy thus to be adored and praised!—Ah! where are we? Into what a region of frost, of darkness, of the shadow of death are we advancing!—Is this, Sir, the light which is so ardently hailed, and so loudly proclaimed by the 'rational Christians,' of this favored age? Is it here that we are to find the grand consummation of divine knowledge, that 'purer system of Christianity,' to which you and your 'liberal' brethren would guide mankind? Is it in this chilling, dismal clime, that professed Christians of every name are to meet together in one blessed fellowship? No wonder then that Jews and Infidels, Mohammedans and Pagans are invited to participate in the blessedness. And no wonder, that they who adore the Lord Jesus, as '*the true God and eternal life*,' and delight in the ascription, 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father,—to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever,' should decline the invitation." pp. 13, 14.

Dr. W. then urges the unreasonableness of supposing, that the Scriptures have left the primary subjects of inspiration in such obscurity, as the writings of Mr. C. and other Unitarians would lead us to believe. He examines the question, whether the appellation, *Son of God*, implies any inferiority of nature, and shows the doctrine of the primitive church on that subject. He states the system of Dr. Clark, and concludes, justly for aught that we can see, that "if there was ever a Tritheist in Christendom, Dr. Clark was

one; and if, (as Mr. C. had asserted,) "the liberal Christians in this part of our country agree substantially with Dr. Clark," instead of being Unitarians, they are Tritheists." He goes into a very sublime, because a very scriptural, explanation of the doctrine of the Trinity; of which we should gladly quote several pages, did our limits permit. He introduces a very weighty passage from the Bishop of Durham, whom Mr. C. had called the "profound Butler," and claimed as an ally, but whose belief, on the subject of the Trinity, was most directly opposite to Mr. Channing's. The popular objection of Unitarians and infidels, that "it is out of our power to believe a proposition of which we *do not know the meaning*," is scrutinized; and it clearly appears, as an inference from Mr. Channing's most abundant concessions, that Unitarians do not know the meaning of the single essential article of their creed; viz. "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God;" nor of the proposition, "Christ died for our sins."

Dr. W. does not concede, however, that the case is the same with Trinitarians in regard to the doctrines which they believe. He contends, that himself and his brethren "understand the meaning of the proposition, The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three Divine Persons in one God." We are very happy that this subject fell in the way of Dr. Worcester. It is one, which has afforded Unitarians much self-complacency, and on which they seem to think themselves triumphant. For a year or two we have intended to examine it, and are not a little pleased, that the discussion has fallen into abler hands. On the objection of mystery, we quote a short paragraph:

"The objection of mystery, which you and other Unitarians are perpetually urging against the Trinity, might be urged, and has been urged, with equal reason, and with equal force, against all the principal doctrines of religion, both natural and revealed. If we are to fly before this objection, we must fly not only from orthodoxy to Unitarianism, but from Unitarianism to Deism, from Deism to atheism, and from atheism to universal skepticism. If the pretensions of the "rational Christian" to superior wisdom, because, to avoid mystery, he denies the Trinity, are well founded; then for the same reason, the Deist is wiser than the rational Christian, the atheist is wiser than the Deist, and the universal skeptic is the wisest man of all. And upon this scale, I suppose, the pretensions to wisdom are actually graduated." p. 32.

Dr. W. next examines the creed of Unitarians, that is, of Mr. C. and his friends, on the subject of the *atonement*; and this discussion forms a very interesting part of the pamphlet. He shews, that Mr. C.'s views of this doctrine are entirely vague and ambiguous; that he evidently framed a creed, which should embrace all Unitarians, whether they believe in the atonement or not.

In answer to what Mr. C. had said respecting the evils of separation, and the obligations of charity, Dr. W. inquires into the scriptural meaning of *charity*, and illustrates the subject by the example of our Savior and his apostles. He forcibly contrasts this charity with the indifference to religious doctrines contended for by

Dr. Price, and many other Unitarians, beside Mr. Channing. He then comes to the question, whether, as Mr. C.'s whole system of fellowship supposes, it is impossible for an uninspired man to attain any certainty respecting the great truths of the Gospel. This discussion is so admirable, that we cannot resist our inclination to lay it before our readers, as containing a specimen of the powerful reasoning employed throughout the pamphlet, and as exhibiting in a very strong light the true question at issue.

"Is it however so, that no uninspired man can know, nor has a right to judge what the true Gospel of Christ is? For what purpose then were the apostles and the prophets before them inspired? Was it merely for their own benefit? or at most for theirs, and the benefit of others of their own times? For what purpose then were the revelations which were communicated to them, committed to writing, and transmitted with so much care to succeeding generations? Of what use are the Scriptures, if no uninspired man can know with any certainty what are the doctrines contained in them?—The celebrated Hume has asserted, that miracles could be of no use, as attestations to a divine revelation, excepting to such as were eye-witnesses of them; because no other persons could have sufficient evidence of the facts. But I believe that even that gigantic adversary of the Gospel never went so far as your argument goes: never undertook to assert that a divine revelation, though well attested, could never make any doctrine or truth certain, excepting to inspired men; because no other persons could ever know with any certainty what doctrines or truths are revealed. Had he lighted upon this discovery, he would have found an argument against revelation, incomparably more available than any which he has urged; an argument which, if correct in its premises, must be decisive in its conclusion; for unquestionably a God of infinite wisdom and goodness would never communicate a revelation to the world, for the instruction and faith of uninspired men, if none but the inspired could understand it, or attain to any certainty in regard to its doctrines. Upon this Unitarian principle, inspiration, to answer its purpose, must be continued throughout all ages; just as Hume contended that miracles must be.

"This point demands very particular attention, for it is the very hinge on which the question respecting fellowship turns. Let it then be again distinctly noted, that you have found yourself compelled to concede, that the inspired apostles did exclude from fellowship those who embraced another Gospel, or doctrines or opinions subversive of the Gospel of Christ. This establishes the principle decisively, that it would be right to separate from such now, could it only be determined what the Gospel of Christ is, and what another Gospel. But this, you contend, no uninspired man or body of men has a right to determine. The Unitarian system, as set forth by Mr. Belsham, is clearly opposite, in every essential point, to the orthodox system. Yet no uninspired man has a right to determine, which of these two opposite systems is the true Gospel; no one has a right to pronounce either of them false! And, therefore, the believers in either of them have no right to separate from the believers in the other!—If it be really so, then let us hear no more of the great Protestant principle, that *the Scriptures are a sufficient rule of faith*; for instead of being a sufficient rule, they are no rule at all. They do not enable or warrant us to decide between two systems, fundamentally and diametrically opposite, which is true, or whether both of them are false. What the Gospel of Christ is, no uninspired man can tell. If any undertake to determine, and to pronounce an opposite system another Gospel, they are to be regarded as illiberal and uncharitable men, "proud and arrogant" pretenders to "infallibility," ignorant "bigots," and odious "persecutors."

"The question respecting fellowship or separation certainly resolves itself into this point. If the Scriptures are a sufficient rule of faith, if from them uninspired men can know what the doctrines of Christ are, or what the true Gospel is; then they have apostolic, divine authority for withdrawing and withholding fellowship from those, who reject the true, and embrace

another Gospel. If the Scriptures are not a sufficient rule of faith; if no un-inspired man can know what the Gospel of Christ is; then the "faith of Christians is vain, and our preaching also is vain;" and we have yet to wait, in gloomy uncertainty, in dismal darkness, until God in his sovereign goodness shall again bless the world, or some portion of it, with the gift of inspiration." pp. 52, 53.

We should really be pleased to see Mr. Channing undertake to grapple with this passage. If he should not be willing to try his strength upon it, let him take a long passage, which Dr. Worcester quoted from Chillingworth, in the conclusion of which that able writer declares, "I do heartily acknowledge and believe the articles of our faith to be in themselves truths as certain and infallible, as the very common principles of geometry or metaphysics."

Mr. Channing had assumed it as a fact, that the false teachers, in the days of the apostles, were men of much worse character than any class of teachers in our days; that they knew distinctly that they were opposing the truth, and were therefore justly excluded from Christian fellowship. Dr. W. exposes the fallacy of these assumptions; and concludes, that "there is no evidence to show, nor reason to believe, that the adversaries of the truth were not as sincere, as candid, as virtuous, and as respectable, in the first days of the Gospel, as they are in the present age."

Mr. C. had complained, that a condemning sentence should be passed upon the characters of men; by which Dr. W. understands him to mean 'a sentence of non-communication.' The inquiry is then made, whether Unitarians do not claim and exercise the right of excluding from their fellowship persons who deny their one essential article? And yet a denial of this article results merely 'from difference of opinion,' from 'mistake in judgment,' and may, if Mr. Channing is to be trusted, be perfectly innocent. Not only does Mr. C. exclude from Christian fellowship on account of opinion; but, on the same account, passes 'a condemning sentence on the characters of men.' Dr. W. then selects only a small part of the passages, in which Mr. C. had poured forth a torrent of obloquy and reproach against all, in every age, who have thought it right to exclude professed Christians from the church, on account of their doctrinal errors. We think Mr. C. must have been somewhat startled at the number, violence, and opprobrious character of the epithets, which had flowed so volubly from his pen; and which clearly indicated, that the habit of using the language of vituperation and abuse was but too prevalent with him and his friends. At the close of this exposure Dr. W. declares, that 'it was with no common feelings of grief he found himself compelled to say, that a heavier sentence than Mr. Channing's, against the disciples of the Lord, against "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," had never, he believed, been pronounced, by the bitterest of enemies, either pagan or infidel.'

Mr. C. had insisted, that the "only standard of Christian character is the *life*." Dr. W. was not disposed to controvert the declaration of our Savior, "By their fruits shall ye know them." He showed, however, at large, and with decisive effect, that *fruits*, in the scriptural sense, do not intend external morality merely. Indeed noth-

ing can be clearer, than that *fruits* are relied upon in contradistinction from mere *professions*, as the test of character. Under *fruits* are comprehended all discoverable evidences of a person's real character, in opposition to his own unsupported *pretensions* to virtue and piety. The Scriptures plainly teach, that the reception of the cardinal *doctrines* of Christianity is not less indispensable, than the practice of its moral *precepts*, to the very existence of the Christian graces.

The Letter closes with a view of some of the 'frightful consequences,' which Mr. Channing apprehends from the contemplated separation.

We have faithfully given the outlines of this masterly production, and can assure our readers, that it is well worthy of deliberate and repeated perusal, and to be kept on the shelf as a complete and unanswerable refutation of the most common and plausible sophistries of Unitarian writers. We understand Mr. C. pronounces it to be *so bad*, that he will not answer it. We applaud this resolution.

It now remains, that we introduce some miscellaneous topics, which it seemed most proper to reserve for the close of the article.

Dr. Worcester observes, in his First Letter, that Mr. Channing 'seems to forget that his liberal brethren in England have not only proposed a separation, but have actually carried the proposition into effect.' p. 31. Mr. C. in his Remarks on this letter, p. 22, assumes it as a fact, that the separation made by Unitarians in England is much less to be dreaded than the one proposed by Dr. W. as the former is only "a *separation in worship*, a separation produced by the adoption of prayers, hymns, and doxologies, accommodated to their peculiar sentiments." Dr. W. asks, in his Second Letter, p. 20, "What is this, I pray you, but a thorough disruption of fellowship, a complete non-communion?" In his last pamphlet, p. 47, Mr. C. describes the worship of the English Unitarians as "singularly free from peculiarities;" and says "that all Christians may join in it without hesitation or pain." "I learn," says he, "that Mr. Lindsey introduced into his chapel the Liturgy of the Church of England, omitting only the few parts, in which the doctrine of the Trinity is recognized, and directing all the prayers to the Father through the Son. This is the worship, which is most common among all denominations in this country, and by which no Christian can be offended. Most sincerely do I wish, that our public services may be marked by this liberal character."

Doubtless "all denominations in this country" profess to offer prayers "to the Father through the Son." But if Mr. Channing means, that they so direct their prayers to the Father through the Son, as to withhold divine worship from the Son, his assertion is notoriously and grossly incorrect; if he does not mean this, he means nothing to the purpose. Is Mr. Channing serious in supposing, that all Christians may, "without hesitation or pain," join in prayers, from which all worship to the Son and the Holy Spirit is designedly and systematically excluded? He ought to know better. Are we to take, as a specimen of Mr. C.'s accuracy, his assertion that the Liturgy of the Church of England recognizes the doctrine of the Trinity in a "*few parts*" only? If we are, this is a pretty fair sample. As to the *wish*, expressed by Mr. C. in the last sentence quoted above, we think Trinitarians, who alter their prayers for the sake of pleasing Unitarians, are chargeable with a very unwarrantable compliance. If they believe the Lord

Jesus Christ to be worthy of the highest divine honors; and that he receives, and will forever receive, these honors from saints and angels in heaven; how can they pretend to excuse themselves for withholding that worship which they believe justly due? and withholding it for the sake of gratifying those, whom they believe to be in dangerous error; thus, in their own judgment, sacrificing truth to error?

The design of Mr. C. in the passage now under consideration, was to prove, not only that Trinitarians and the lowest Socinians may hold each other in fellowship, but that they may actually unite in public worship "without hesitation or pain." In proving this, he evidently supposed he should shew Dr. W. to be incorrect, in what *he* had alleged concerning the separation recommended by Unitarians in England. But could Mr. C. be ignorant, that Dr. W. relied on the representations of Mr. Belsham? And does not Mr. Belsham say, concerning the system of Trinitarians compared with that of Unitarians, "No! No! Opinions such as these can no more harmonize with each other than light and darkness, than Christ and Belial. They who hold doctrines *so diametrically opposite* CANNOT BE FELLOW-WORSHIPPERS IN THE SAME TEMPLE." Now we humbly conceive, that Mr. Belsham is here the advocate, both of separation in worship, and of non-communion. If Trinitarians and Unitarians "cannot be fellow-worshippers in the same temple," we do not see how they can join, (as Mr. C. says they can,) in the same worship "without hesitation or pain." And as to communion, Mr. C. must either admit Mr. Belsham to be the advocate of "separation," of "exclusion," of "denunciation," or he must prove, that light and darkness mean substantially the same thing, and that Christ and Belial may really be on very good terms with each other.

Mr. C. inquires, in the note to his last pamphlet, p. 46, "why cannot this controversy be conducted with calmness, without impeachment of character or motives, and without appeals to popular feeling?" Indeed, why can it not? We think Mr. C. ought to answer his own question. We should be extremely fond of knowing, whether Mr. C. considers his three pamphlets as being distinguished for *calmness*. If he does, his mind must be one of the greatest curiosities, which the moral universe contains. Again; why did Mr. C. find it necessary to impeach the *character and motives* of Dr. W. and of orthodox Christians generally, who hold to the duty of excluding men from Christian fellowship for religious error? As to *appeals to popular feeling*, if we may judge of the tendency of a writing by its appearance to our own mind, or by its effects on the public, no pamphlets were ever more entirely and characteristically made up of such appeals, than are the pamphlets of Mr. Channing. The Layman entirely fails in this particular. He rouses nobody's passions but his own. Mr. C.'s Letter to Mr. Thacher excited a more uncontrollable tempest of indignation, rage, and a desire of revenge, than has ever been observed in this region within the memory of man; and this, if not its only effect, was the prominent one. Dr. W.'s Letters have, on the contrary, assuaged the stormy passions, directed the minds of men to topics of sober inquiry, and given great consolation on the bed of sickness and of death.

We had intended to give some specimens of Mr. C.'s contradiction of himself. For one of these we refer the reader to the note, at p. 66 of Dr. W.'s Third Letter. We briefly mention another. Mr. C. expatiates very freely, after the manner of all latitudinarians, on

the evil of being positive, dogmatical, and censorious; and on the duty of being diffident, modest, meek, and remembering that all men have their frailties, their prejudices, and their attachment to system. "Let us be"—says he to Mr. Thacher—"Let us be what we profess to be, patient inquirers after truth, open to conviction, willing to listen to objections, willing to renounce error, willing to believe that *we as well as others* may have been warped in our opinions, by education and situation, and that others may have acquired important truths which *through weakness or prejudice*, we may have overlooked." pp. 28, 29. "*Every man*," says he in his last pamphlet, "is partial to his own opinions, because they are his own, and *his self-will and pride* are wounded by contradiction." p. 32. We might quote many passages, which recommend diffidence in forming and expressing opinions. Indeed, almost all Mr. Channing's declamation falls at once to the ground, unless this proposition can be supported; viz. that no professed Christian has a right to say, that any other professed Christian embraces fundamental or important errors. As a practical comment on the diffidence, which he had been recommending, his last pamphlet contains this passage: "But Unitarians [and of course Mr. C. with the rest] never stop here. They *always declare* that Scripture *with one voice* disowns the doctrine of the Trinity, and that of all the *fictioners or theologians*, the doctrine of three persons in the one God, has perhaps the *least countenance from the Bible*." This is the *modest* man, the enemy of all positiveness and dogmatism!

When Dr. W. wrote his First Letter, he was careful that Mr. C. should receive a copy, accompanied by a note of fraternal courtesy, before the pamphlet was published for sale. This attention was not reciprocated by Mr. C. 'in either of these respects;' and when he thought proper to attempt an answer to the letter, he addressed his Remarks to the public. The same course of conduct was adhered to by each party, we understand, through the whole controversy; and Dr. W. continued to address his letters very respectfully to Mr. C. while the latter turned away from his antagonist, and addressed his speech to the public. We should not mention this, were it not a fair example of the politeness, the urbanity, practised by the liberal party toward their opponents. We have known several instances, when, on public occasions, gentlemen of the liberal party have been treated with courtesy and respect; not worshipped, indeed, as though their opinions were infallible, or their arguments incapable of refutation; but listened to with seriousness and candor, and regarded as gentlemen of education, and of high standing in society, should be regarded. We have not seen this courteous treatment generally reciprocated; but have several times taken notice that it was met with a sour, morose, repulsive aspect and demeanor. Let those of our readers, who have the means of observation, bear in mind this trait of the liberal party. If we are in an error, we should be happy to see it corrected.

Mr. Channing complains, that our representations are injurious to himself and his brethren; particularly by giving to persons *at a distance* a false account of the clergy of the liberal party, of their preaching and their doctrines. We state, for his serious consideration, the following fact. There have been many instances, in which gentlemen of education and great respectability have visited this region from a distance, and have used all the means in their power to learn the nature of the theology taught by the clergy of the liberal party. Of these gentlemen a considerable number have been

men of piety, well acquainted with the Scriptures; and not a few have been clergymen. They had heard much of Boston divinity, and had seen our representations. They of course heard all the preaching they could, and attended to it with great interest. Not one of these gentlemen, so far as our knowledge extends, ever expressed an opinion that the clergy of the liberal party had been injured. Many, to our certain knowledge, have declared, that the preaching generally heard from gentlemen of that party was more *destitute of the Gospel*, and often more *contrary to the Gospel*, than they had ever before imagined.

Mr. Channing has applied to our Review many approbrious epithets, of which we are not disposed to take the least notice. That article has received the approbation of men, in whose presence Mr. C. would not assume any tone of superiority;—of men whose consciences are not less tender, whose motives are not less pure, and whose decisions are not less weighty, than those of Mr. C. and his brethren. We do not mean to imply, that the approbation of men, however great and good, is a safe rule of conduct. But, in the present case, our own deliberate opinion of what was right is confirmed by the judgment of persons of high standing in the churches, on both sides of the Atlantic. This we think sufficient to counterbalance the “denunciations,” which were so authoritatively uttered by Mr. Channing.

It is remarkable, that in the Christian Instructor published at Edinburgh in June last, (the same month in which our Review appeared,) there was a Review of certain Unitarian pamphlets, which had recently been published in Scotland. The occasion is seized by the Reviewer to expose the ridiculous and insufferable manner, in which Unitarians praise each other; and the whole article evinces most clearly that the sect is precisely the same on each side of the water.

It was manifest in our Review, that Unitarianism of the Priestleian sort, is in the near neighborhood of infidelity. This is abundantly proved, in the article to which we have just referred. “The sincere and conscientious Deist,” says Mr. Cogan, as quoted by the Christian Instructor, “cannot be far from the kingdom of heaven.” “The objections of a rational and virtuous Deist,” says the same writer, “cannot be against the pure primitive principles of our religion; they can only be opposed to doctrines of fallible men, some of which must be spurious, and others of an inferior importance. They are all of a mere speculative nature.”

In short, this Unitarian writer goes on, in such a manner as would lead to the conclusion, that every “rational and virtuous Deist,” (that is, every Deist who *says* he is rational and virtuous,) ought to be received into Christian fellowship; a conclusion to which Dr. Worcester proved that Mr. Channing’s principles would lead him. “Did the general creed of Christians,” says Mr. Smith, the Unitarian coadjutor of Mr. Yates, “comprise only the simple and sublime doctrine of Unitarianism, and were the lives of its professors in any degree consistent with their avowed belief, I am persuaded that there would scarcely be an infidel to be found; for in this system there is nothing which the understanding can reject as unreasonable, or the heart oppose as malevolent; the enlightened must perceive it to be just, and the good must wish it to be true.” What a direct opposition is this to the whole tenor of our Savior’s preaching. What a contradiction to the uniform testimony of Scripture on the subject of unbelief. And yet Mr. Smith can talk of his reverence for the Scriptures, with as much fluency as Mr. Channing. He is not afraid, however, to speak of “the common doctrine of future punishment as a doctrine which, he is happy to declare, Unitarians have sense enough to distrust, and goodness enough to detect.” In this irreverent, presumptuous, profane manner, do leading Unitarians permit themselves to speak of the most solemn and awful truths of revelation; and with such men as these does Mr. C. insist, that the orthodox should hold Christian communion.

Our readers will remember, that Mr. Wells wrote a short letter to the Editor of the Patriotist, which was published in our number for July, and which we have already once mentioned in this article. Though we by no means agree with Mr. Wells, in the inter-

pretation of his letter to Mr. Belsham, we do cordially agree with him in referring that letter, with his observations upon it, to our readers. It was with pleasure that we inserted his short explanatory letter; particularly as he did not, like Mr. Channing and the Layman, fall into a passion, nor utter such reproaches, as would have been ill suited to his character as a scholar and a gentleman. We can even apologize for the obnoxious part of his letter to Mr. Belsham; that in which he made so free with the characters of the orthodox. The letter was written in haste, without any expectation that it would be published; and we presume the expressions which it contained were not weighed with much accuracy. In this way it may have come to pass, that several paragraphs, probably without much consideration, were filed with the rest of the party.

We intended to quote the first paragraph of the Layman's pamphlet, and to exhibit, in as brief a manner as possible, the folly, extravagance, and perverse ignorance, or total disregard of truth, which are manifest in that paragraph alone. Our readers would then be able to judge what sort of a writer the Layman is, and to what credit his representations are entitled. But we have not the room necessary for this purpose. Dr. Worcester appropriated two pages, in a postscript, to the consideration of the Layman's rhapsody of 72 pages; which was quite as much as it deserved. Let not our readers suppose, that we consider the liberal party as responsible for this pamphlet. We have never heard, that it was approved by a single individual of that party, except the writer; and, unless we have been misinformed, it has been regarded by the party in general with entire disgust and contempt. We do not see how any man could more effectually destroy his own reputation as a writer, than the Layman has done by the pamphlet in question. Still we are not to forget, that this miserable compound of rant and malevolence is the production of a man, who has been distinguished in the liberal party by his talents and his zeal, and who is now considered as the most active member of the Corporation of Harvard College. The Layman will probably suppose, that we wish to prevent his pamphlet from being read. This is not the case. It is true that we cannot conscientiously advise any one to buy such an effusion, unless for the mere purpose of seeing how wretchedly a man of talents, and of learning on some subjects, can write in a bad cause. For the future, we think there is little hazard in asserting, that the writings of the Layman, whether he attacks the character of individuals or of large bodies of men, will receive as little attention, and exert as little influence, as his adversaries could desire.

Both Mr. Channing and the Layman have introduced the President of Harvard College, and attempted to vindicate him from the observations made concerning him in our Review. We had mentioned "a letter of consolation and encouragement, written by Dr. Kirkland to the New Unitarian Church in Philadelphia;" which, as we stated, they had "been complaisant enough to publish by shewing it to several of their orthodox friends." This statement we made on what we deemed good authority; and we believe any candid man would have so deemed it. But we now find, that the letter in question was not addressed formally to the Unitarian Church; but to "a zealous member" of the Socinian Society in Philadelphia; and that it may not have been published to the orthodox, any otherwise than by *relating its contents*. We have made diligent inquiry on the subject; and, after considering the extract in the note to the Layman's pamphlet, have no reason to doubt, that the letter of Dr. K. was substantially, though not formally, what we represented it; and that it was intended by the writer to promote the cause of Socinianism in Philadelphia.

"The story which the Reviewer tells," says Mr. Channing, "of a number of men assembling on the evening of Commencement, and putting together their observations on the President's prayer, sounds badly." We quote this passage for the sake of showing Mr. Channing himself, how easy it is to misrepresent; and to give an odious appearance to the most natural and innocent actions. We told no "story" of "a number of men assembling." We said, "several gentlemen of education and respectability, from different parts of the American union, came to the unanimous conclusion. *Nec!*" The fact was that some of these gentlemen were in one place, and some were in another; but they all came to the same "unanimous conclusion." Nor did those, who were in one place, "assemble," for the sake of "putting together their observations on the President's prayer," as Mr. Channing's language would intimate. The prayers of the President did, indeed, excite the astonishment of these gentlemen; and this astonishment they expressed to each other, as we suppose they had a right to do. Those of them, who were from distant parts of the country, had not before imagined, that such prayers were ever offered in a Christian land; especially by a clergyman, who was at the head of a great literary institution. Mr. Channing, having added from his own invention the circumstance of "assembling," proceeds to make a very odious comparison, which implies the existence of several other odious circumstances; though for these insinuations there was not the slightest pretence. He concludes, by representing these gentlemen as "*spies*," because they had been so wicked as to observe and converse about the President's prayer; "*spies*," for listening to the prayers of Dr. Kirkland, on commencement day, in the midst of two thousand people! We did not publish our account of these prayers without deep regret. We should despise any thing like a verbal criticism on public devotional services. We should equally despise the publication of strictures on the more private conduct of any gentleman, holding an important public office; because such conduct might receive notice, or appearance, from carelessness, inadvertence, occasional levity, or a thousand other causes. But we do not conceive ourselves to have infringed the rules of the most scrupulous

decorum, in having adverted to the *general and peculiar character* of public services; which character must have been the result of a religious system, and could not be imputed to inadvertence, carelessness, or any temporary cause. We thought it a very solemn fact, that the general character of devotional exercises, on commencement day, in Harvard College, this favorite institution of our venerable forefathers, should be sunk down to the level of sober Deism. Others have thought it a solemn fact.

"There is another charge against the President of Harvard University," says Mr. Channing, "which no one certainly will expect me to notice; it is the charge of having written an article in the *Anthology* above four years ago. I am not in the habit of asking gentlemen, whether they are the authors of pieces which appear without a name; nor do I conceive that the President of Harvard University is bound to answer to the public, whenever an anonymous publication shall be laid to his charge."

This paragraph was written because Mr. Channing felt himself obliged to say *something*; Did Mr. Channing wish his readers to believe, that the President of Harvard College did *not* write the article in question? If he did wish his readers to believe so, we solemnly put the question to his conscience; Did *he* *himself* believe, what he wished to make others believe? If he did *not* wish his readers to believe so, why did he write the paragraph? Can any well informed man, who lives within fifty miles of Boston, doubt whether Mr. Channing was ignorant, who the writer of the article was?

Again, does Mr. C. wish to be understood, that the circumstance of the article having been written "*four years ago*" diminishes the criminality of having written it? Is there a statute of limitations, which can be pleaded at the bar of the Christian public, of conscience, and of God, in justification of any offence against religion, which may have been committed "*above four years ago*?" If there is, it will be a happy discovery for the whole race of scoffers; and there are many other articles in the *Anthology*, the authors of which will gladly take advantage of the statute.

Why did not Mr. Channing let the public know, whether he approved or condemned the passage, which we quoted from the article in the *Anthology*? If the passage was innocent, it must have been a small offence in us to have imputed it to any one; if the writing of the passage was a heinous offence, Mr. C. ought to have acknowledged it to be so, or not to have mentioned the subject at all.

The fact is, whatever Mr. Channing may say or think on the subject, that the article, which we quoted from the *Anthology*, made a very deep impression upon the Christian public. It cannot be winked out of sight. It cannot be excused or palliated. It is considered as one of the most pernicious, and one of the most culpable examples of scoffing at religion, which can any where be found; as holding up to ridicule all religious anxiety, all concern for the salvation of the soul; as deriding the holy joy of the penitent sinner, who casts himself upon the mercy of his Savior, and glories in the doctrines of the cross. Thus it is understood: and there are several other passages in the same article, which sustain the same unhappy character.

A gentleman of the liberal party informed a friend of ours, that he was present when the article was read in manuscript for the approbation of the conductors of the *Anthology*, at one of their weekly meetings. The writer was frequently interrupted, while reading the article, by peals of ungovernable laughter; so that it was not without difficulty that he was able to proceed. Mr. Channing appears to have a great sensibility to "sneer," "insult," and "sarcasm," in any case where he imagines these weapons to be directed against himself or his brethren. What does he think of several clergymen and laymen "assembling" by appointment; and one of the clergymen taking out of his pocket a string of sneers and sarcasms, written in the coolness and stillness of academic bowers;—of sneers and sarcasms, directed, not against the weaknesses or even the virtues of his fellow-men, but against *those great truths of religion*, which have been the consolation of the pious in every age? What does he think of such a string of sneers and sarcasms being read amidst a roar of laughter, and loud cheering, from every part of such a learned, liberal, clerical auditory? Is not this "*sitting in the seat of the scornful*?"

We designed to make a few observations on the effects of the present controversy; but we must crowd what we have to say on this subject into a single paragraph. We observe, then, that in the early part of the controversy there was a most uncommon exhibition of anger and indignation, throughout the whole extent of the liberal party. These wrathful passions have been succeeded, in many instances, by deep and pathetic lamentations over the evils of controversy, and of separation. We have not heard whether any of the party suppose Mr. Channing to have the better of the argument. Possibly some of them do; we believe most of them do not. On the other side, the temper and the feelings have been very different. We have neither seen nor known any orthodox person angry, throughout the whole discussion. We have heard no fears, no anxiety, expressed among our friends, as to the result. They have been satisfied, that the cause of truth would be the gainer. They have been persuaded, that, in the language of Dr. Worcester, it is not a "violation of the great law of love, for the friends of truth to decline communion with its rejecters." Though we lament the unchristian feelings, the violent animosities, of which the controversy has been the occasion; we rejoice that the minds of men in this region, are awakened to consideration, and that the disclosures which have been made are so many and so important, as that the concealment of a minister's religious system will hereafter be difficult, if not impracticable.





